THE AALBORG ATTACK

SCAPA FLOW AND THE *U-47*

Number 72

AFTER THE BATTLE

NUMBER 72

Edited by Winston G. Ramsey

Published by Battle of Britain Prints International Ltd.,
Church House, Church Street,
London E15 3JA, England
Telephone: 081-534 8833
Fax: 081-555 7567

Printed in Great Britain by
Plaistow Press Ltd., London E15 3JA

© Copyright 1991

After the Battle is published quarterly on the 15th of February, May, August and November.

United Kingdom Newsagent Distribution:
Seymour Press Ltd., Windsor House, 1270 London Road, Norbury, London SW16 4DH. Telephone: 081-679 1899

United States Distribution and Subscriptions:
Bill Dean Books Ltd., P.O. Box 69, Whitestone, New York 11357. Telephone: 1–718–359–6969

Canadian Distribution and Subscriptions:
Vanwell Publishing Ltd., 1 Northrup Crescent, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2M 6P5. Telephone: (416) 937 3100

Australian Distribution:
Technical Book and Magazine Company, Pty, Ltd., 289–299 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000. Telephone: 663 3951

New Zealand Distribution:
South Pacific Books (Imports) Ltd., 6 King Street, Grey Lynn, Auckland 2. Telephone: 762-142

Italian Distribution:
Tuttostoria, Casella Postale 395, I–43100 Parma. Telephone: 521 94702, Telex 532274 EDIALB I

Dutch Language Edition:
Quo Vadis, Postbus 3121, 3760 DC Soest.

CONTENTS

THE AALBORG ATTACK 1

IT HAPPENED HERE
Scapa Flow and the *U-47* 12

UNITED KINGDOM
American Red Cross Field Hospital Unit 28

READERS' INVESTIGATIONS
The Death of Generaloberst Dietl 32

FROM THE EDITOR 35

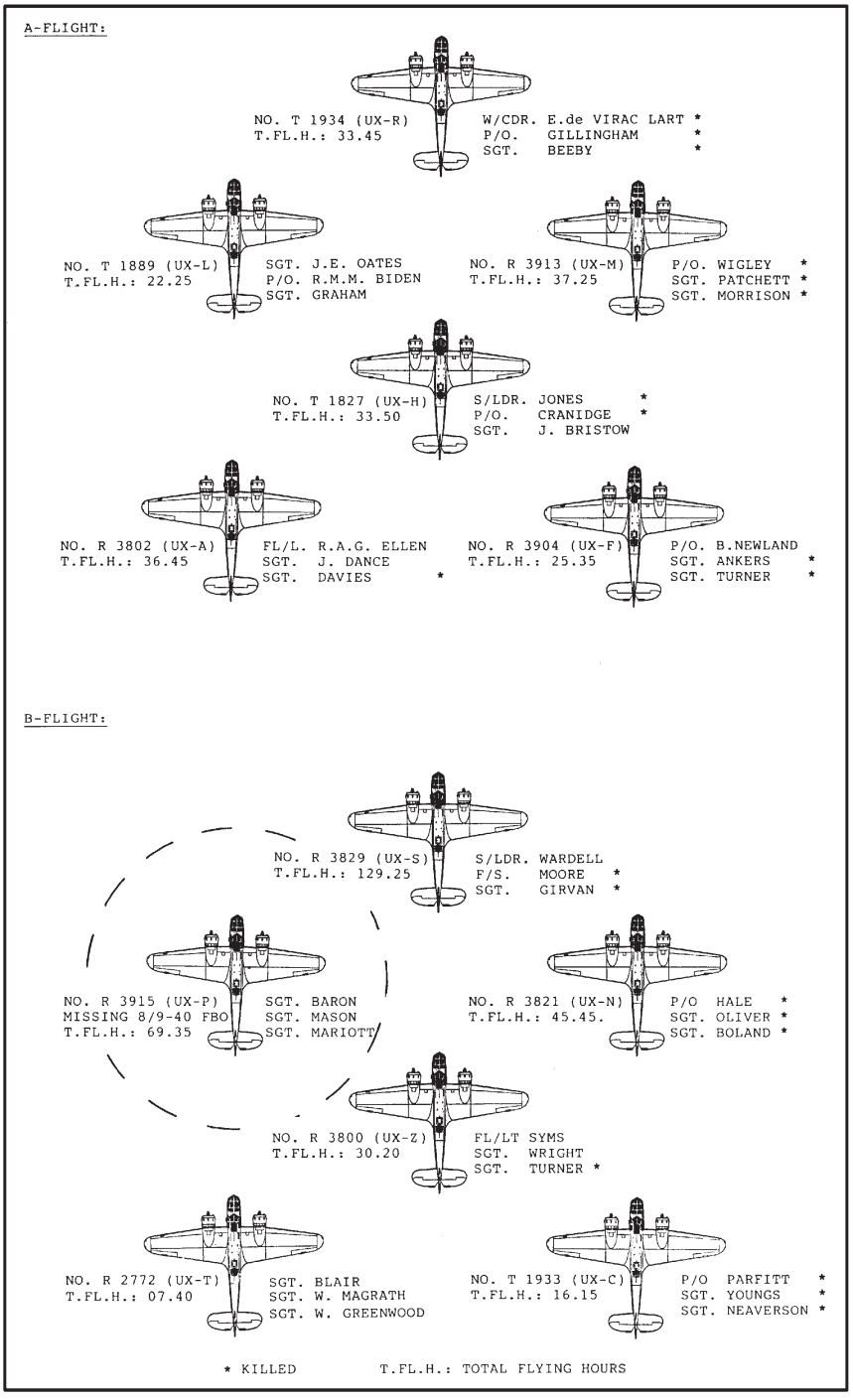
Front Cover: German artillery pieces at the foot of a cliff in Jersey where they have lain since 1945. Only visible at low tide, they have defied all previous recovery attempts. Now Terry O'Brien's technical expertise is about to prove that brain-power beats brawn-power — see *From the Editor*. (A. Chalker)

Centre Pages: The wreck of the blockship *Collingdoc* in Water Sound in the Orkney Islands where Kapitänleutnant Günther Prien sank the *Royal Oak* in October 1939. (Dr Peter Schenk)

Back Cover: Poignant memorial on the crash site of Generaloberst Eduard Dietl's aircraft high in the Austrian mountains. (Ron Gamage)

Acknowledgements: Dr Peter Schenk would like to extend his grateful thanks to Ernst Dziallas for his help with the identification of former crewmen of the *U-47*.

Photo Credits: IWM — Imperial War Museum.



Tuesday, August 13, 1940 is better known in the history books of air warfare as Adler Tag — Eagle Day — when the Luftwaffe began its campaign to eliminate the Royal Air Force in southern England to prepare the way for invasion. However, just as the German Air Force was attacking British aerodromes, so the RAF was attempting to mount raids to those airfields on the Continent being used by the Luftwaffe. Such an operation took place on the morning of Eagle Day when No. 82 Squadron of No. 2 Group was instructed to carry out an attack on the German-occupied Danish airfield at Aalborg. 'A' Flight took off from Watton and 'B' Flight from the satellite 'drome at Bodney. Before crossing the west coast of Denmark, Sergeant Baron in Blenheim R3915 (circled) turned back through indicated lack of petrol. The remaining eleven aircraft pressed on to Aalborg where they were all shot down, twenty airmen being killed and others seriously injured. It decimated the squadron which had already suffered a similar tragedy three months previously when all its aircraft failed to return from a raid to Belgium. On each occasion the squadon was re-formed within 48 hours, the second time under a new CO, Wing Commander E. C. de Virac Lart. This sketch plan of the fatal attack formation to Aalborg was complied by Ole Rønnest, a detective-inspector with the North Jutland police force who investigated the discovery — and recovery — of one of the aircraft: R3800 piloted by Flight Lieutenant Syms. (Inspector Rønnest acknowledges with grateful thanks the assistance given him by eight of the thirteen surviving airmen: R. M. M. Biden and his private notes in his wartime log concerning the formation drawn a short time after the disastrous raid; information from J. F. H. Bristow, J. Dance, R. A. G. Ellen, W. Greenwood, W. J. Q. Magrath, B. T. J. Newland and J. E. Oates.)

THE AALBORG ATTACK

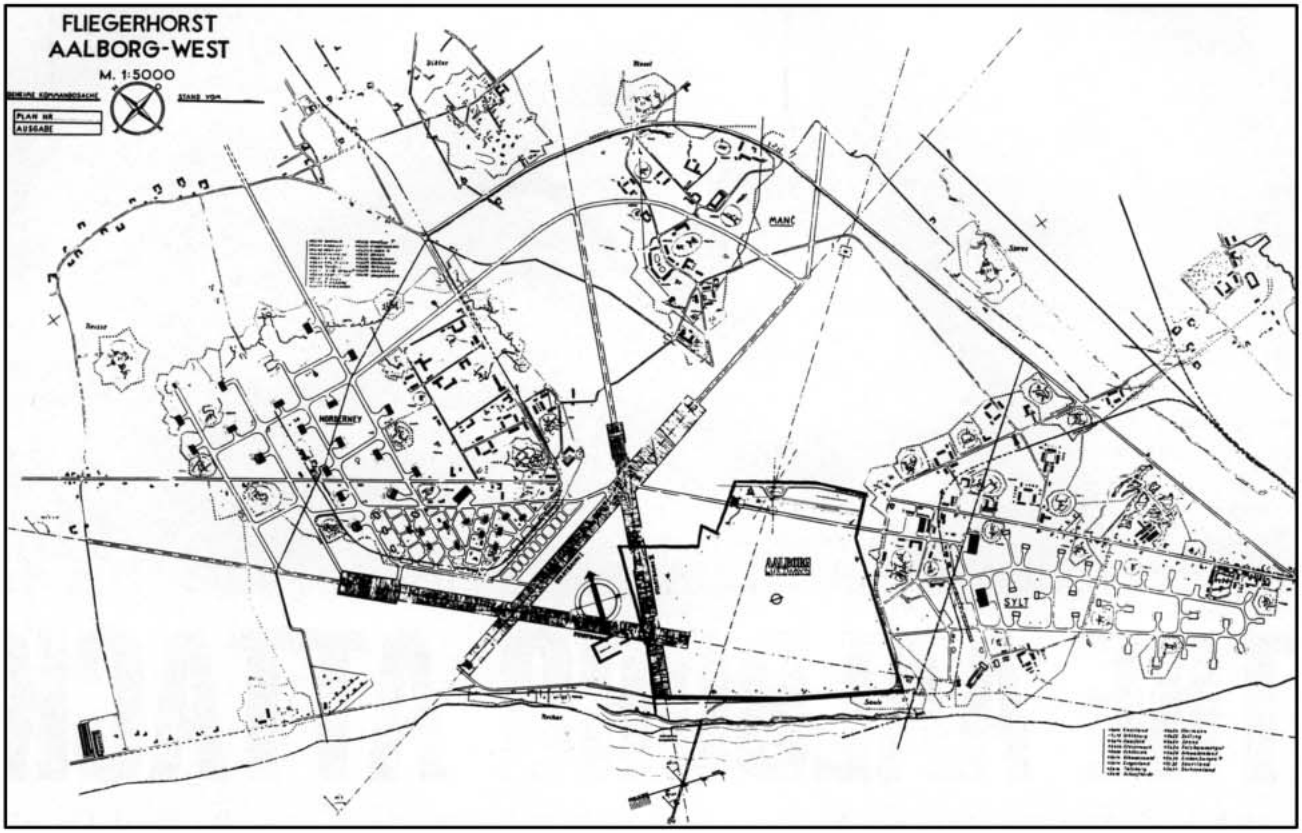
By Paul Lincoln

August 13, 1940 was a fine summer's day with good visibility and light westerly winds. This was the day designated by the Germans as 'Adler Tag' or 'Eagle Day', the commencement of the all-out attack on RAF aerodromes in Britain. The Battle of Britain was in full swing.

By the end of the day the Luftwaffe had flown 1,485 sorties, the highest number to date, losing 44 aircraft. They claimed 88 RAF aircraft shot down and, although the total was in reality less than half that, the German report that eleven out of twelve RAF aircraft were destroyed attacking the Danish city of Aalborg, was true. Just one aborting aircraft prevented No. 82 (Bomber) Squadron from being totally wiped out.

The rôle of most of the Blenheim squadrons at this time was to bomb Luftwaffe airfields, in much the same way as the Germans were bombing British aerodromes, but the Blenheims were slow and outgunned by the German fighters. Already 82 Squadron had suffered grievously during an operation on May 17 to attempt to halt German forces advancing through Gembloux near Brussels. Early that morning, twelve aircraft set out to rendezvous with their escort of Hurricanes over the target, but not one of the Blenheims arrived, eleven having been shot down, mainly by anti-aircraft fire. The twelfth, badly damaged, just managed to scrape back home to its base at Watton in Norfolk. Now, less than three months later, history had repeated itself and the squadron had once again ceased to exist.

Top: **The aircraft investigated by Detective-Inspector Rønnest (R3800) in its final moments.** *Above:* **The Blenheim crashed fifty yards offshore in front of the German seaplane base on the other side of the Limfjord from Aalborg airfield.**



Copy of the original map of Fliegerhorst Aalborg-West constructed by the Germans during the war. Most of the aerodrome was built between April 1940 and July 1941 and it became one of the biggest German bases in northern Europe. (The original civil airport which was the target for No. 82 Squadron on August 13 is outlined.) The airport was opened in 1938 with modern buildings and facilities but the Germans found it far too small and after the occupation they immediately started to demolish the buildings, including a 250-year-old manor house situated right in the path of the NW–SE runway (see map). The three concrete runways had been completed by July 26, 1940, and soon German bombers and fighters from Fliegerhorst Aalborg-West, Fliegerhorst Aalborg-Ost and the Aalborg See massed for possible raids on England.

Denmark had been invaded on April 9, the country quickly capitulating in the face of the superior hostile force. From the very first day of the German occupation, the Aalborg area became a stepping stone for operations against Norway, and engineers began the immediate expansion of the civil airport. This had been opened in 1938 with modern buildings and facilities, but these were deemed far too small for Aalborg's new importance as a vital staging post between Germany and Norway. Buildings were demolished, including the 250-year-old Rødslet manor house which lay in the path of one of the planned runways.

These activities did not go unnoticed in Britain, and the first raid on 'Fliegerhorst Aalborg-West' took place on April 20. However, within three months three concrete runways had been constructed and soon German bombers and fighters were massing for the air operations prior to the launching of Operation 'Sealion' — the invasion of Britain.

Nevertheless the frenzy of construction had not gone unnoticed. During the war Aalborg was to become the most raided target in Denmark but, because it lay on the far side of the country, navigation had to be of the highest order. It was also at maximum range although in its favour was the fact that it was possible to approach the airfield over inland waterways, thus avoiding flak.

The target as it appears today, photographed from the post-war control tower.

Wartime Watton. No. 82 Squadron's base guardroom — note the air raid shelter on the left of the photo. Today the same building houses the 'Wartime Watton' museum. the airfield itself seeing only the occasional visiting aircraft.

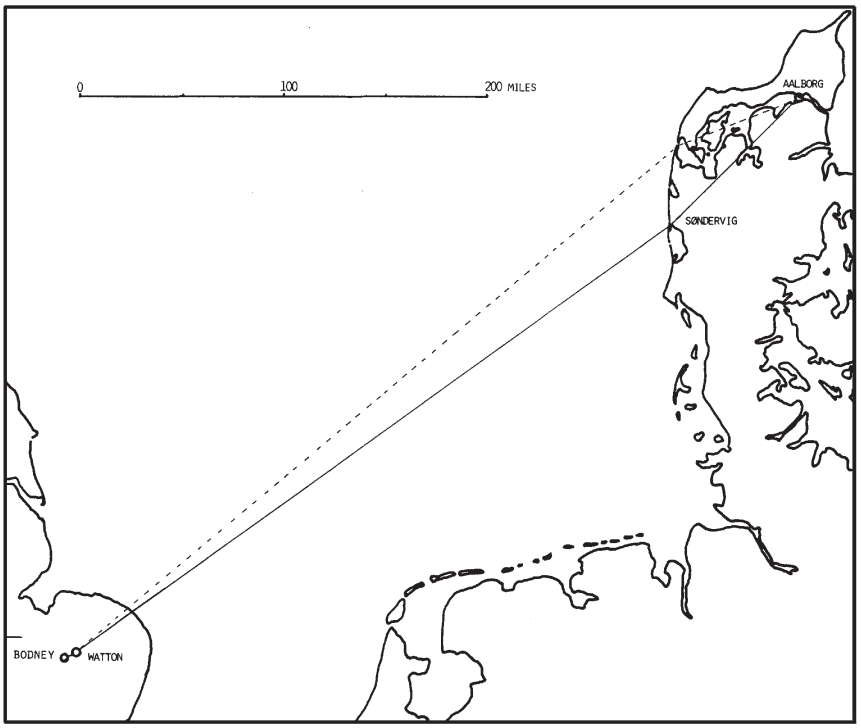
THE RAID

Watton, some 20 miles west of Norwich, housed Nos. 21 and 82 Squadrons. Of the latter, 'A' Flight was based on the main aerodrome and 'B' Flight at the small satellite airfield five miles to the west at Bodney. The squadron had no idea, of course, that on the other side of the Channel the day had been earmarked as the start of the air assault on Britain. Each of its aircraft was bombed up with a full load of four 250lb HE plus some fragmentation bombs with the task of attacking Aalborg — 'Airfield S.D.9'.

Indifferent weather over northern France and the Channel on August 13 was to delay the start of the German offensive, but all of 82 Squadron's Blenheims were airborne at 8.45 a.m., led by Wing Commander E. C. de Virac Lart. As soon as the whole squadron was in formation, course was set for north-west Denmark. It soon became apparent, however, that there was an error of two degrees in the course being flown, but with strict radio silence in force, it was not possible for the following aircraft to speak to the leading machine. Attempts to warn Wing Commander Lart by Aldis lamp also failed to attract his attention.

On reaching the Danish coast, Sergeant Baron in R3915, UX-P, decided that he would run short of fuel and turned back, reaching base shortly after 1.00 p.m. (His was the only aircraft to return from the mission, and Sergeant Baron had to face court-martial proceedings for aborting, although he was exonerated.)

The remaining aircraft continued on the wrong bearing, making landfall at Sondervig, many miles south of the intended point. It was at this stage that the navigational error was corrected, and the Blenheims turned onto a direct heading for Aalborg. Soon afterwards they passed over an observation post which was quick to appreciate the intended target of the British bombers. Consequently, nine Messerschmitt Bf 109s that had just landed at Aalborg following an escort mission were quickly refuelled.



The track to the target. The dotted line shows the intended course using an approach via the lightly-defended waterways to the west. However, due to a navigational error, the force hit Denmark too far to the south, necessitating an approach overland.

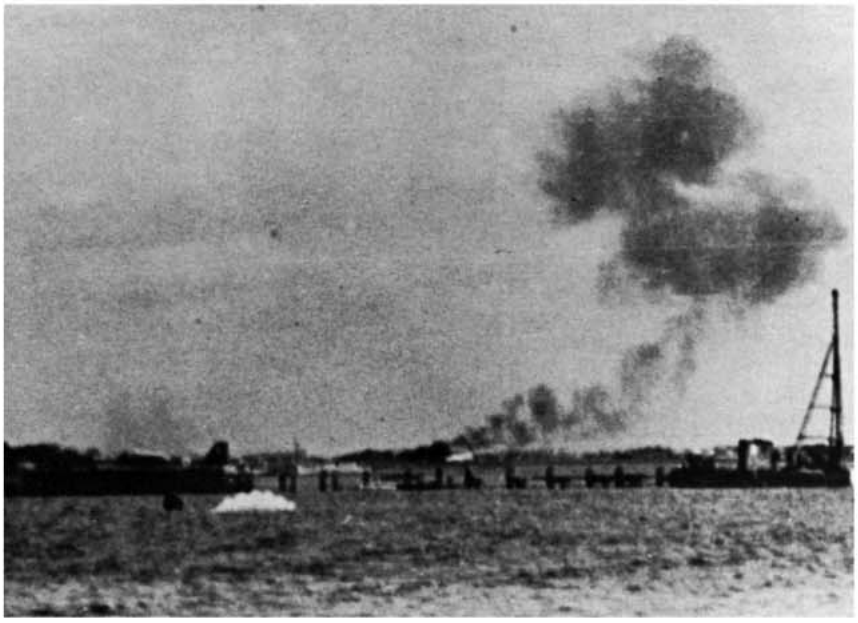
Left: **Blenheim UX–Z (R3800) at its dispersal point in the Great Wood at Bodney, Watton's satellite airfield, shortly before its last mission.** *Right:* **Fifty years later, Inspector Ole Rønnest (left) sits in a Dodge command car at the same spot during a visit in May 1990. With him is 'Paddy' Woods who was one of the first ground crew posted to Bodney in March 1940. Concrete runways were never laid down, although the Americans installed PSP matting later in the war.**

It would appear that Wing Commander Lart realised that a warm reception would be waiting for them as there was still nearly 20 minutes' flying time ahead of the formation. Led by the CO, 'A' Flight went in first at considerably less height than planned, dropping some bombs on the target and killing two Danish civilian workers. However, the German fighters were waiting for them and closed in, shooting down five of the six, the last aircraft, UX-L, that of Sergeant Oates, being forced to crash-land. Eleven of the eighteen aircrew in the first wave were killed.

Three minutes later, the five remaining aircraft of 'B' Flight arrived over the airfield. First to be shot down was UX-C, killing Pilot Officer Parfitt and both crewmen. Flight Lieutenant Syms in UX-Z was next, the Blenheim bursting into flames over the sea and going into a steep dive. Flight Lieutenant Syms and Sergeant Wright managed to bale out, landing in fairly shallow water, but Sergeant Turner went in with the aircraft.

Sergeant Blair's UX-T followed immediately, crashing in shallow water at the edge of Limfjorden, all the crew surviving, although Sergeant Magrath was badly injured. (He spent a year in hospital before escaping and walking to Spain, being awarded the Military Medal for his exploits.)

UX-N (Pilot Officer Hale) crashed on the actual target, killing all the crew, and UX-S came down just to the north with only the pilot, Squadron Leader 'Rusty' Wardell, surviving.



As UX–Z plummeted towards the sea, Flight Lieutenant Syms and Sergeant Wright managed to bale out. Here a parachute can be seen floating on the water in front of a Heinkel He 115. The pile-driver to the right bears evidence to the fact that the seaplane station was being extended at the time. The smoke in the background comes from UX–C (T1933) at Nørholm Enge (see map page 6).

Left: **Sergeant Wright, the observer, is helped ashore on the south bank of Aalborg See.** *Right:* **Wrapped in a blanket yet uninjured, his papers are inspected by Luftwaffe personnel. The third crew member, Sergeant Turner, was killed in the crash.**

The success of the German defences in downing all the attacking aircraft was heralded in extensive (and largely accurate) reports in the controlled press which appeared the following day:

Wednesday evening, August 14th, 1940

THE AIR COMBAT OVER AALBORG AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Yesterday evening news from Ritzaus Bureau gave the following official report about the air combat at Aalborg: Tuesday between 12 and 13 hours, a squadron of 12 English bombers made an attack against Aalborg airport. Heavy German AA fire met the bombers and they were attacked by German fighters. Five of the attacking bombers were shot down by the German AA fire and six by German fighters. Only one English bomber returned to England.

Some Danish people were wounded during the attack but only a few were wounded seriously and two of them died later. Some bombs which were dropped in a field near Aalborg killed some horses and cattle, but no news about damage on material or anything else is known yet.

Flight Lieutenant Syms, the pilot, lies on a stretcher smoking a German cigarette. He had a broken ankle and was taken to the German hospital in Aalborg where he was reunited with the other wounded survivors: Sergeants Greenwood, Magrath and Blair, Pilot Officer Newland and Squadron Leader Wardell.

The Luftwaffe armourer, Feldwebel Klein, who was responsible for removing all warlike stores, guns and ammunition at the various crash sites. It was while he was checking R3800 that he found Sergeant Turner in the tangled wreckage.

During the construction of this marina in 1981, the remains of R3800 were discovered and Inspector Rønnest drafted in to investigate for bombs or human remains, not knowing then that Feldwebel Klein had already searched the wreckage back in 1940. This picture was taken on August 13, 1990 — exactly fifty years from the instant when UX–Z hit the water near the small yachts on the left.

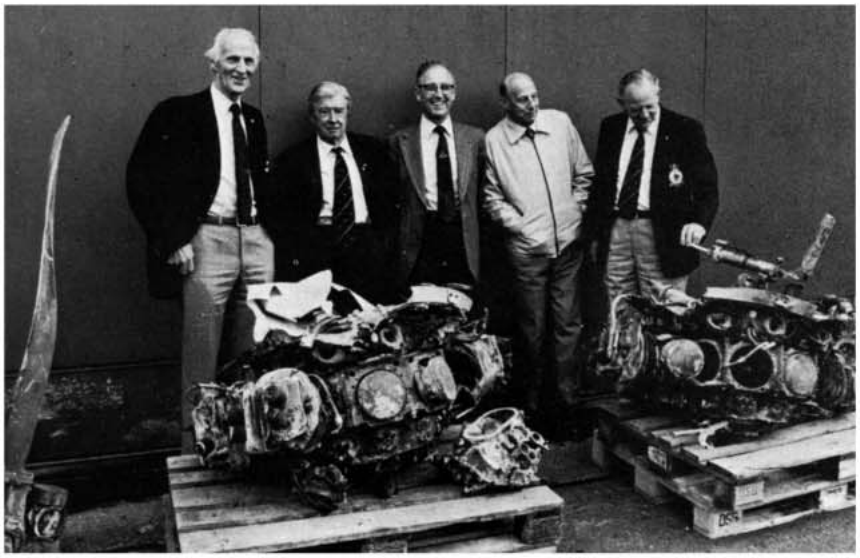
WHAT EYEWITNESSES TELL ABOUT THE COMBAT

Further details about the air combat are given by eyewitnesses. A man working in the Norden concrete factory says that: 'As soon as we heard the air raid warning alarm I ran out towards the shelter and during the three to four minutes that it took me, from what I could see the fight had finished. As I ran out the first explosions from the AA guns could be heard and when I looked up I saw about ten English bombers coming — as far as I could see in two formations. They flew in at about 1000 metres, heading west from south, but they were met with shells from the AA fire. At the same time I saw four or more German fighters go up. Immediately they made an attack and in this attack the last of the two formations was scattered. One of the bombers in this formation was hit and I saw the tailplane fall off and the bomber fall vertically into the ground. It crashed at the area "Hundeklemmen". After that another bomber caught fire over the island of Egholm. I saw a man parachuting out very clearly. Another bomber was hit and crashed. The rest disappeared behind houses and trees. As long as I live I will never forget these particular minutes.'

FROM AALBORG ONE BURNING BOMBER WAS SEEN TO CRASH

Immediately after the air raid warning one of the staff from *Aalborg Stiftstidende* went to the police headquarters. The air raid warning siren had not yet finished when he heard the noise from the English bombers and the noise from the AA gun-fire. He reports: 'The weather was fairly good with only a few white clouds in the sky. The English bombers came from the south and passed the city in finger formation, tracking in a northern direction. The AA guns fired and the shells exploded round the bombers like small clouds of cotton wool against the blue sky. The English bombers flew in at a height of 1000 metres when the AA guns opened up against them. Smoke from the exploding shells around the bombers gave

Above: **Both propellers were recovered, together with the Mercury engines, seen *below* being inspected by some of the survivors who returned to Aalborg in 1984. L–R: Ronald Ellen, John Oates, Bill Magrath, John Dance and John Bristow.**



It seems incredible that all three crewmen from UX–T (R2772) survived the crash on the opposite side of Egholm Island, albeit severely wounded (Sergeants Blair, Magrath and Greenwood). *Left:* **Erik Hansen, a local carpenter, took the 1940 picture.** *Right:* **Another of the Danish eyewitnesses, Erik Nielsen, points out the point of impact in the shallow water north of the island.**

the impression that there were at least fifty aircraft in the air.

'Soon afterwards one of the bombers was seen to be hit. A yellow flame appeared from the aircraft which fell out of the formation and started to descend but then levelled out again and continued on course. Two seconds later the bomber turned half round and descended with yellow flames surrounding it. Its speed increased more and more and a moment later it crashed just like a yellow-red torch. Meanwhile the flames left a line of fire across the sky. This lasted only a few seconds before it disappeared behind rooftops. Before that, a white dot could be seen. The white dot glided down and grew bigger. It was a parachute which opened and floated slowly down.'

A second eyewitness ftom Aalborg tells how he watched one of the English bombers being hit: 'It looked like the bomber burst into two pieces. At the same time smoke and fire emerged from the bomber and it went down at terrific speed. I could see that the crew tried to bale out. However, one of the airmen was trapped by the lines of his parachute and he was pulled to the ground with the bomber.'

PEOPLE FROM EGHOLM ISLAND WADED OUT INTO THE LIMFJORD AND SAVED THREE CANADIANS WHO HAD BEEN SHOT DOWN

On the island of Egholm most of the people were onlookers to the disastrous fight. They were working with the harvest in the fields when they heard the air warning siren. Simultaneously the AA gun-fire started and thereafter the people had the greatest of problems freeing their frightened horses from the harvesting machines. Shots roared out and made the window-panes rattle all over the island, and from houses and fields people watched the duel between the English bombers, the AA guns and the German fighters. A young girl who watched the terrible scene recounts that she saw not less than five bombers crashing, most of them on fire. One of the bombers crashed a hundred metres from the beach in very shallow water. When the bomber hit the sea it was completely smashed up and parts were spread over a hundred metres. From the beach, people could see three men sitting helplessly in the wreckage. Immediately people waded out to the wreckage to find three young Canadians *(sic)*, one of them suffering seriously. His arms and legs were broken and his face looked terrible. The other two airmen were severely injured in their arms, legs and faces, and they were bleeding profusely. People from Egholm got the airmen to the beach and they were taken to the Kamillianerklinikken hospital in Aalborg by motorboat. Possibly the reason why the three men were not killed instantly was that the fuselage and the cockpit were almost intact while wings and engines were smashed.

Five Blenheims were shot down in the vicinity of the aerodrome, the other six coming down at points north-west and west of Aalborg. Another document from Inspector Rønnest's dossier on the operation.

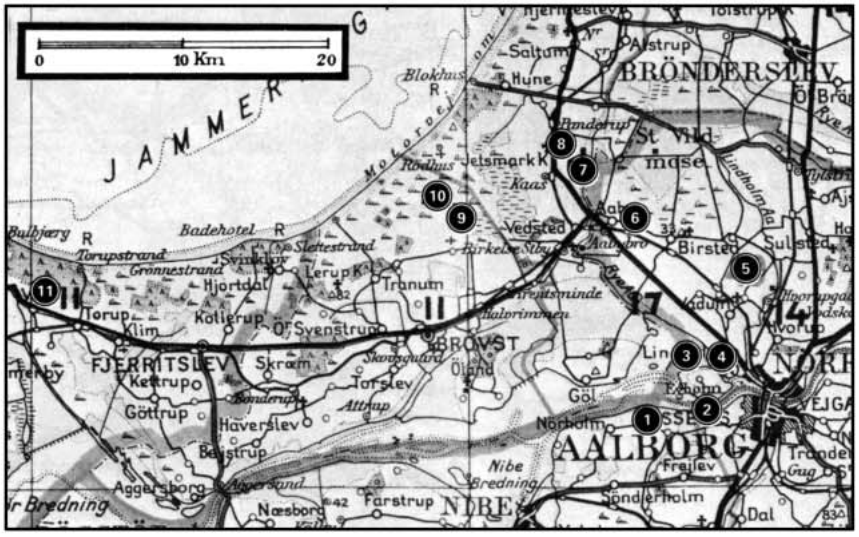
UX–C (T1933) crashed at Nørholm Enge (see map), killing all three crewmen (Pilot Officer Parfitt, Sergeant Youngs and Sergeant Neaverson).

The wreckage was scattered fairly widely across this field with the main point of impact in the centre. Another historic photo by Inspector Rønnest exactly fifty years later.

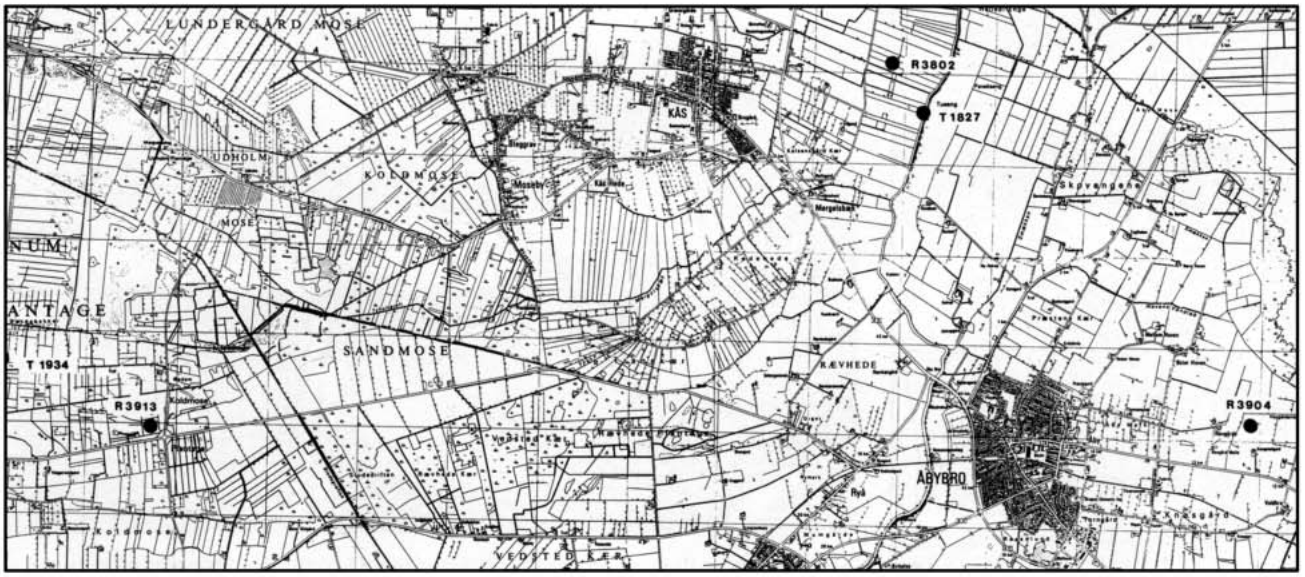
THE BIG AIR COMBAT OVER AALBORG AND PANDRUP

Eyewitnesses report on the air combat which resulted in the crashing of five bombers in this area. It appears that the big combat between the German fighters and the British bombers was mainly fought over the area between Kaas and Pandrup because the British bombers, after their attempt to attack the airbase in Aalborg, turned in a north-west direction chased by a squadron of fast German fighters.

In Pandrup and Kaas the air combat was seen by lots of people on whom the dramatic events have made an indelible impression. A citizen in Pandrup who lived about two kilometres west of the village recounts his experiences: 'Suddenly I heard a furious roar like thunder and a moment later I saw a big aircraft pursued at top speed by two or three fighters which tried to get in the most advantageous position so they could attack the pursued aircraft at its most vulnerable spots. I became an eyewitness to the most hazardous stunt flying. The fighters were now over and now under the bombers. Sometimes the fighters were both over and under the bombers at the same time. They came chasing from behind, firing all the time. The bomber fired too, and small spurts of fire were seen from the aircraft which dived, gained height again and turned in the most hazardous curves and angles. Suddenly the bomber descended in a right angle of ninety degrees towards earth, leaving a trail of smoke behind it. When the aircraft hit the ground it exploded and it looked as if the bombs under it had gone off. It went into the ground so that only the rudder and the tail stuck out, with the wreckage scattered all around. The crew, too, were completely smashed.'



1. T1933 — Nørholm Enge; 2. R3800 — Limfjorden; 3. R2772 — Limfjorden; 4. R3821 — airfield; 5. R3829 — Torpet/Vadum; 6. R3904 — Aabybro; 7. T1827 — Lundbak/Kaas; 8. R3802 — Lundbak/Kaas; 9. R3913 — Klithuse/Udholmsvej; 10. T1934 — Klithuse/Rødhusvej; 11. T1889 — Vust.



The countryside east and south of Pandrup where five of the aircraft came down. (Inspector Ole Rønnest)

Inspector Rønnest: 'I am proud to present the next three photos which I managed to identify. The photo above is fairly well known although the aircraft has not been previously identified. In Danish history it has been stated that the person lying in front of the aircraft is a dead British airman, the aircraft being a Blenheim which crashed near Aalborg on 13 August 1940.'

FIVE AIRCRAFT WERE SEEN CRASHING

A citizen from Pandrup rushed into the mill when the air combat started, but before he had climbed to the top the combat had almost ended. The fighters flew so low that you simply had to crouch down. Bullets from the machine guns were found in several places. 'Five minutes after I had seen one of the bombers crash, and the pursuit of the two remaining British aircraft had continued to the west, six or eight German fighters appeared flying towards Aalborg. Later we heard that one of the two remaining British aircraft had crashed near Vust, which is near Fjerritslev. All in all, I saw five aircraft being set ablaze which crashed in this area.'

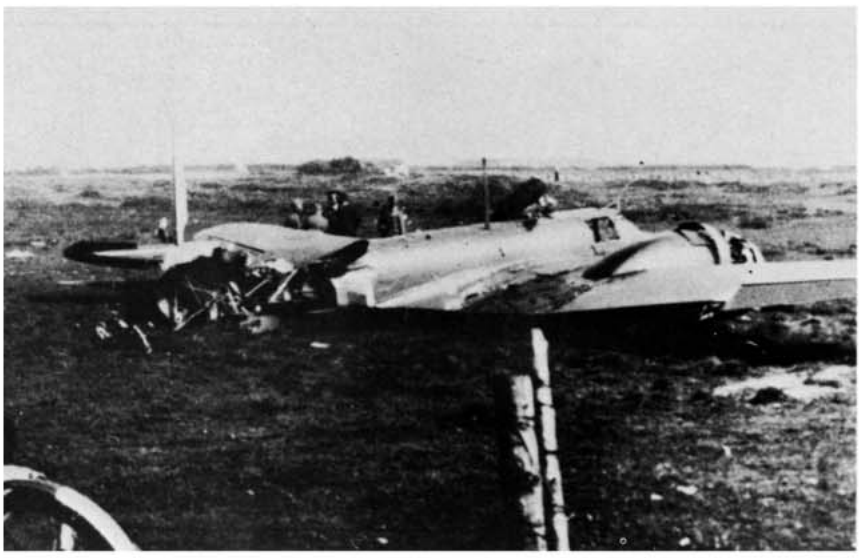
Another eyewitness from Kaas tells how he became so frightened at the violent shooting and noise from the aircraft as they flew at each other that he dived into a ditch full of water. From there he watched the planes winging up in the air and saw the burning and damaged aircraft crash in this area. 'Everything lasted only about ten minutes,' he said. 'It was both an impressive and fantastic experience.'

From the ditch he watched as another four British bombers were chased towards the west by the fighters. He saw two of the aircraft crash over Koldmose, south of Lundergaards Mose.

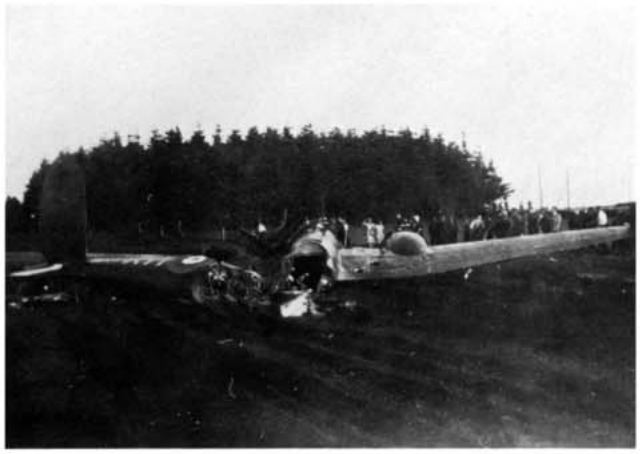
THE LAST AIR COMBAT

The last part of the gigantic combat took place over Hanherred. From the area of Pandrup the aircraft continued along the sea at Torup Strand. The citizens in Vesthanherred report that a British bomber was seen being chased by one or two German fighters. The aircraft were seen coming in from the sea towards Vester Torup. An eyewitness reports: 'It seemed as if the British bomber had received severe hits. It flew very low, almost down above the roofs of the houses. The fighters went down towards it and most of the combat took place between the chimneys. There was a noise like thunder and everything in the village trembled. The bullets from the machine guns whistled and several people took shelter in cellars but as soon as it became calm they came up. However, the aircraft returned several times and the citizens saw the last desperate attempt of the bomber as it tried to escape its hunters. At last it had to surrender and was seen landing in a field east of Vust not far from the main road.

Three men were in the aircraft. Two of them were badly hurt. The pilot had severe injuries to his back and thought that it was broken. The other was scratched and bruised. They were both taken to the hospital in Fjerritslev. The third crewman, a



'The caption on the second photo I obtained merely stated that the aircraft was one of the Blenheims which crashed at the Tranum Klit area west of Aalborg on 13 August 1940.'



'Then, at the local history archives in Aalborg, I found the photo above left. The former and unknown owner of the photo had written on the reverse: Vust 13.8.40. My analysis of the three photos — identical damage on the fuselage, wings and cowlings, the position of the tailplane, etc. — established that they were of the very same aircraft, taken from different angles. In 1981 I succeeded in tracing one of the two Danes who came to the aircraft a few minutes after it crash-landed and pulled out two of the airmen (Oates and Biden) from inside the wreckage. I learned from the Dane, asking him some specific questions, that the "dead" airman in front of the wreckage could only be the pilot, Johnny Oates. I am happy to say that today he is still very much alive and is one of my best friends (1989). All three photos then show the wreckage of Blenheim T1889. The airman in front of the wreckage is John E. Oates lying on the grass, partly stripped of his flying suit and unconscious, waiting for an ambulance. The crash-landing inflicted serious injuries on Oates, a fracture of his skull, a broken back and both his legs paralysed. He and Pilot Officer R. M. M. Bidden, who was observer on T1889 and whose legs were injured, were taken by a Danish ambulance to the hospital at Fjerritslev. The wireless operator and gunner, Sergeant Graham, was unhurt. He burned the papers of the aircraft and became a PoW. The picture on the right was taken by me in 1982,' explained Inspector Rønnest. 'Nothing has changed, with the branches lying where T1889 ended its last flight.'

young Scot who was the aircraft's gunner, was unhurt. He remained with the aircraft until the German authorities arrived and by that time had burned the logbook. The wings of the aircraft had big holes which had apparently been made by anti-aircraft fire as it flew over Aalborg.

This last air combat took place at 12.30. As soon as the aircraft had crash-landed, the German fighters were seen returning towards Aalborg.

This combat claimed eleven British aircraft, out of which six had been shot down by fighters during the combat and five by anti-aircraft guns. As far as can be seen, two of the aircraft lie in Aalborg police district, six in Nørresundby police district, and three in Thisted police district.

The clear-up begins — engineers begin dismantling T1889.

All the wreckage was concentrated on Aalborg airfield, from where it was taken to Germany by train for recycling.

A mass grave was prepared beside the graves of four airmen of a Whitley from No. 102 Squadron (N1383) which had come down on April 26, 1940, ten kilometres north-west of Aalborg (the first British airmen buried in Danish soil in the Second World War).

The twenty airmen killed on August 13 were buried early on the morning of August 16 with full military honours. At this early stage of the war, airmen were still treated decently and respectfully, whether alive or dead. Later, as the air war increased, this was not always the case.

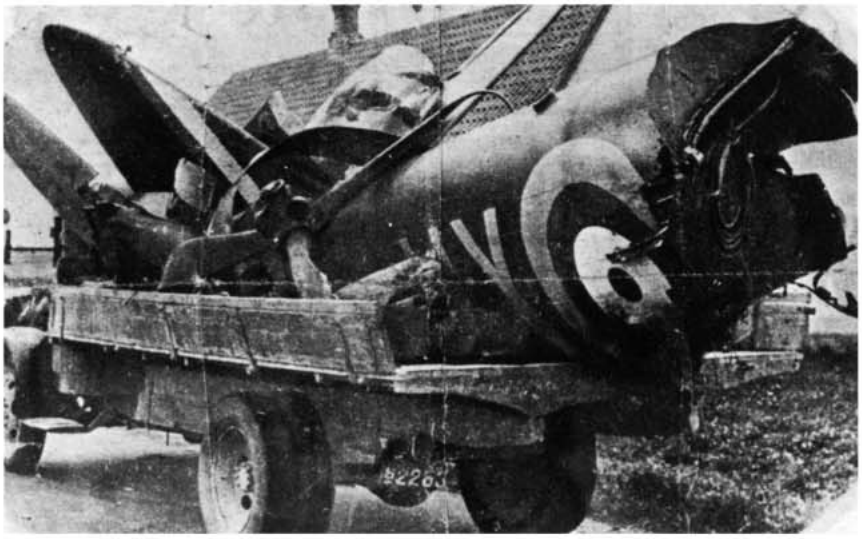
On August 16 the Germans held a full military funeral for the dead crewmen. That same day, the body of Sergeant Turner was discovered in the wreckage of R3800 by a Luftwaffe bomb disposal sergeant, Feldwebel Klein.

A clear-up of the wreckage began almost immediately, with all salvage taken away by rail for recycling — all, that is, except for the buried wreckage of R3800. In 1981 work began on the construction of a new marina, and on August 7, Detective Inspector Ole Rønnest of the North Jutland police force was sent with a colleague to inspect the remains of an aircraft, found by the contractor embedded in the mud, for unexploded bombs or human remains.

After several days' work, two radial engines had been recovered and much wreckage, but no bombs, and permission was given to continue with the building work. However, Inspector Rønnest's interest had been

On the morning of every May 5 — Denmark's Liberation Day — the annual memorial ceremony is held. Here at Vadum thirty British airmen now lie buried: the four airmen from the Whitley crash; the twenty killed on the Aalborg raid, and six aircrew from a No. 10 Squadron Halifax down north of Aalborg on October 15, 1944. Originally buried by the Germans in the village of Nørhalne, where they crashed, their remains were transferred to Vadum after the war.

Flight Lieutenant Ronald Ellen in UX–A (R3802) and the other officers captured were taken to Oflag IXA/H, Schloss Spangenberg, south-east of Kassel. In Denmark he left behind his Mae West, proudly retained by the farmer who had kept it as a souvenir.



'This photo is quite a sensation, showing the tailplane of T1889 on a Danish lorry,' writes Inspector Rønnest. 'In 1984 R. M. M. Biden sent me his wartime log in which he had kept this newspaper photo since his PoW years. A German guard had cut out the printed photo from a German newspaper and given it to him. The British disaster at Aalborg on 13 August 1940 was a great German victory, widely celebrated by the German propaganda. For instance, this photo was released by German newspapers under the headline: "Das war ein englisches Kampfflugzeug".'

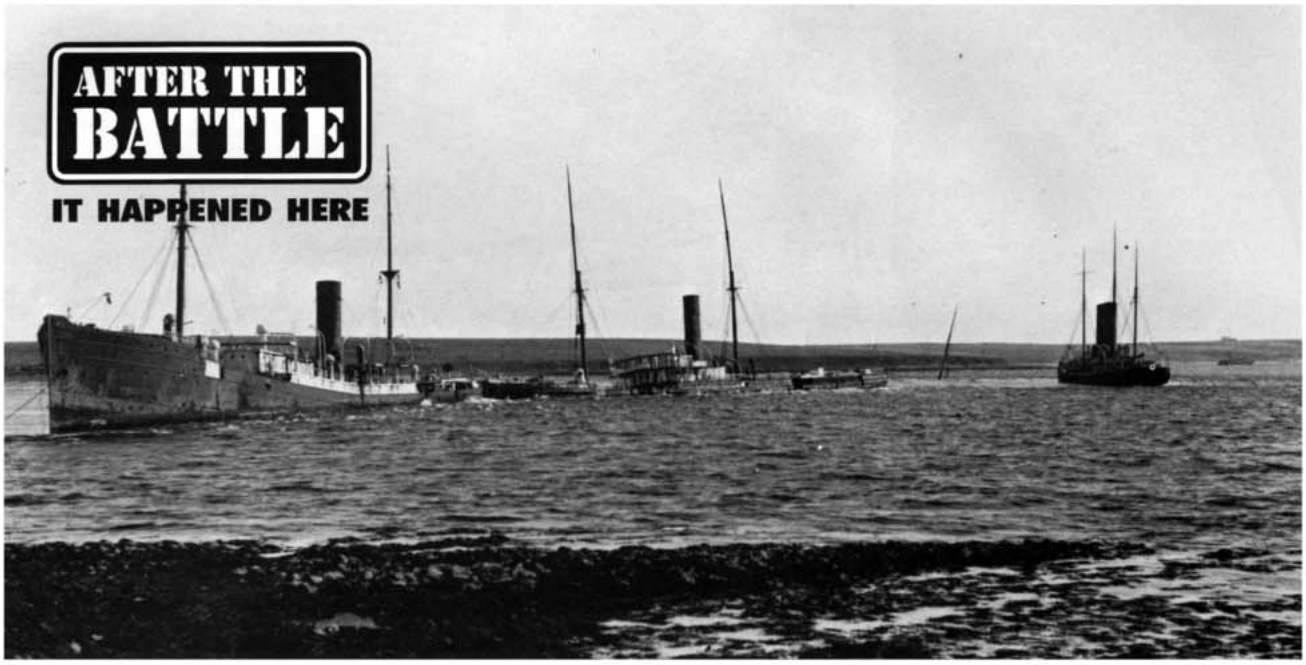
aroused, and his professional penchant for unsolved mysteries took hold. Slowly he pieced together the details of the raid on that fateful Tuesday forty years earlier which had witnessed the deaths of twenty men and the complete decimation of the attacking force. He also traced many of the pictures that the Germans had taken, not only of the aftermath, but some of the actual drama itself.

In 1989 it was decided that a memorial should be erected at RAF Watton in memory of all those who had flown from there, and Wing Commander Ronald Ellen, who had survived the Aalborg raid, suggested that an approach be made to Inspector Rønnest to obtain one of the propellers which he had recovered several years before. The War and National Service Museum in charge of the project contacted the inspector who kindly persuaded the Bangsbomuseum at Frederikshavn to part with the better of the two props which was then shipped back free of charge to Britain by the Danes.

On May 26, 1990, the memorial was unveiled by Air Commodore, The Honourable Tim Elworthy, CBE, Captain of The Queen's Flight, a fitting choice as his father had served at Watton in 1940 and eventually went on to become Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Elworthy.

When in 1989 it was proposed that a memorial should be erected at Watton, Wing Commander Ellen suggested that it might be possible to obtain one of the propellers which Inspector Rønnest had recovered in 1981. One was on display in the Danish War Museum at Frederikshavn so Inspector Rønnest asked the staff at Aalborg airbase if they would part with the second propeller, to which request they gladly agreed.

Unveiled in May 1990, the memorial was dedicated 'To the memory of those of the Royal Air Force and Commonwealth Air Forces who lost their lives while serving at RAF Watton and Bodney.' An additional plaque alongside recorded the fact that the propeller came from R3800, lost on August 13, 1940 while operating out of Watton. In the picture, John Oates, Bill Greenwood, Bill Magrath and John Bristow.



In 1914, the major strategic base for the Grand Fleet was located in the natural anchorage of Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands which lay some 20 miles or so off the northern coast of Scotland. Soon after the outbreak of war, the vulnerable Holm Sound — the eastern entrance to Scapa Flow — was obstructed by the sinking of over fifteen blockships in the four navigable channels. *Top:* **The most northerly entrance between the island of Lamb Holm and Mainland — the Kirk Sound — was blocked by four vessels: L–R: *Numidian, Aorangi, Minieh* (with only its mast showing) and the *Thames*. (A blockship in Skerry Sound — see map on page 14 — can be seen in the distance to the right of the *Thames*.)**

SCAPA FLOW AND THE *U-47*

By Dr Peter Schenk

At the beginning of the Great War, German submarines were regarded as a hazard to the Scapa Flow naval base, situated in the Orkney Islands, due to the fact that sufficient protection for the anchorage had not been provided. As a result, the Grand Fleet spent most of the first three months of the war at sea.

A first step was taken to protect the base when the old battleships *Hannibal* and *Magnificent* were moored at Hoy Sound and Hoxa Sound respectively, until they could be replaced by 4-inch and 6-inch coastal guns covering all entrances. Then in November, the eastern sounds were closed by sinking old merchant ships as blockships. Kirk Sound was obstructed (from north to south) by the *Numidian*, *Aorangi*, *Thames* and *Minieh*; Skerry Sound by *Teeswood*, *Elton*, *Rheinfeld*, *Almeria* and *Argyle*; East Weddel Sound by *Gartshore*, *Lapland* and *Reginald*, and Water Sound by *Clio*, *Lorne* and *Pontos*. Burra Sound in the west was blocked, too, by the *Budrie*, *Urmstone Grange*, *Ronda*, *Gobernador Bories* and *Rotherfield*. Hoxa, Switha and Hoy Sounds were also protected by nets and booms fitted with gates.

After the war was over, the blockships remained a hazard to fishermen and, in order to allow them better access to their fishing grounds, the *Aorangi* was raised in September 1920. The *Numidian*, however, could not be removed because of her deteriorated condition, so she was swung round to lie more to the east of the original line of blockships. Attempts were also made to move the *Thames*, but were abandoned when she broke in two because of the corroded condition of the hull and settled even deeper. The picture shows the attempt to refloat the *Aorangi* on August 24. (T. Kent, Orkney Library)

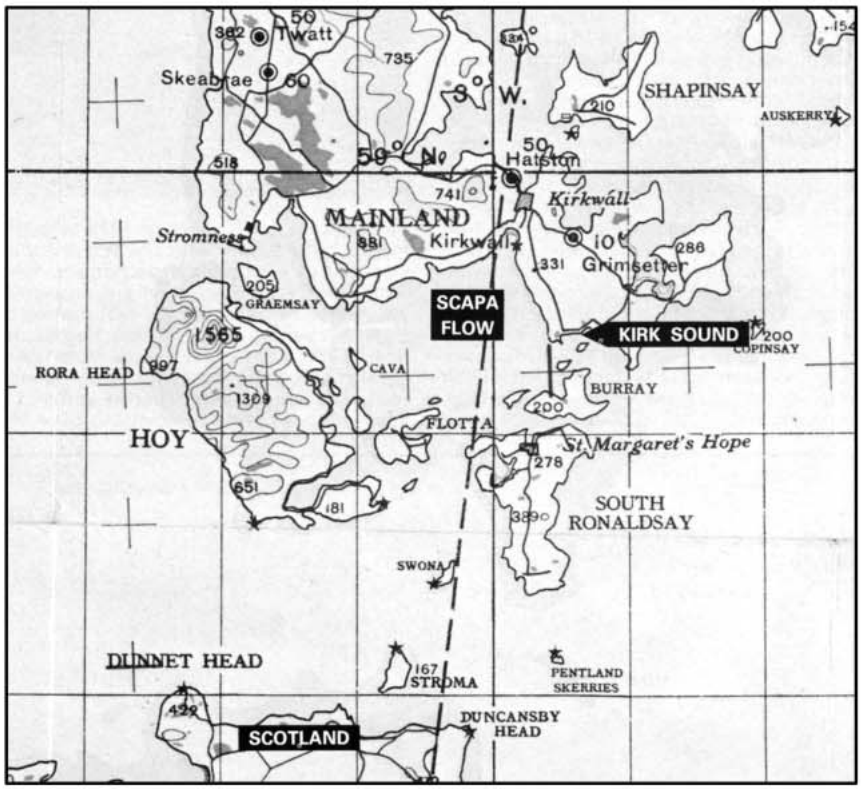
Above: **Kirk Sound, September 22, 1920. From left to right, the mast of the *Minieh*, the *Thames* and *Numidian*, at this date still in her original position. (T. Kent, Orkney Library)**

Bottom: **Dr Schenk's comparison shows the later WWII defences: the Churchill Barrier permanently closed the entrance and the remains of the Holm Battery are in the foreground.**

Too late for an easy attack, *U-18* under the command of Kapitän Heinrich von Henning, arrived in Hoxa Sound on the morning of November 23, 1914, only to discover that the anchorage was empty. On the way back she was discovered by patrol vessels and, after being rammed twice, had to be abandoned.

The last attempt to attack Scapa Flow in the First World War was made on October 28, 1918, when *UB-116* under the command of Leutnant Hans Joachim Emsmann faced even more sophisticated defences in Hoxa Sound. Warned by hydrophones, the mine station on Flotta blew up the submarine when she passed over a detector loop in the controlled minefield.

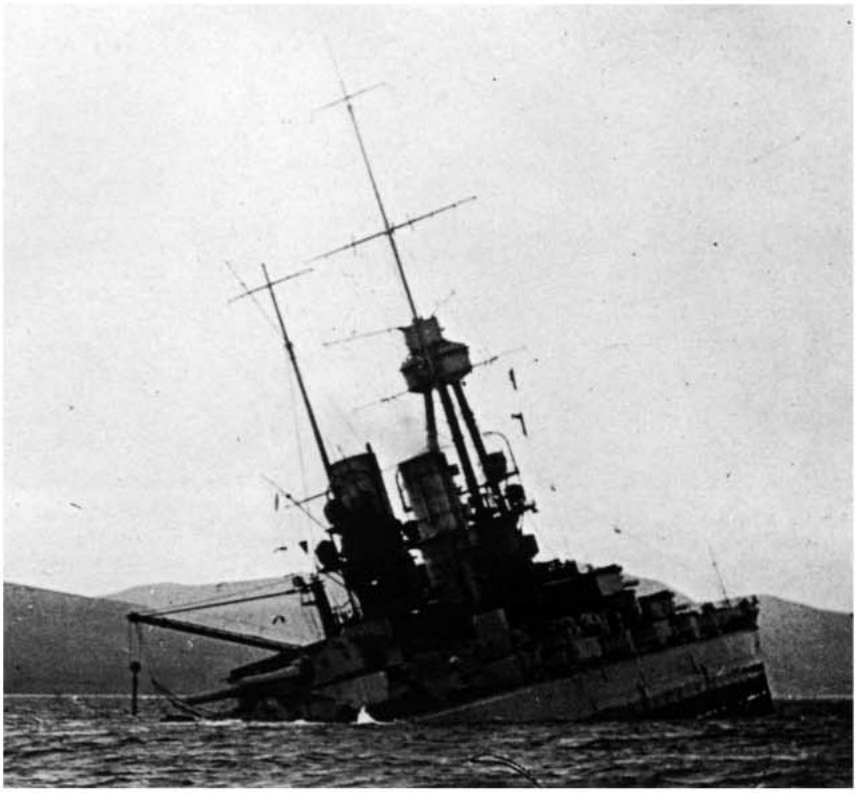
After the war, fishermen living on Burray and South Ronaldsay found the blockships a hazard and asked the Admiralty to remove them, but nothing was done until three Orcadians drowned when their sailing boat was smashed against the wreck of the *Rheinfeld* by the tidal currents in Skerry Sound. In September 1920 the *Aorangi* was raised in Kirk Sound and beached near Holm Kirkyard. After more public discussions, in 1923 it was decided to remove *Numidian* in Kirk Sound and *Lorne* from Water Sound. However, the operation proved abortive and, after removal of most of the ballast from *Numidian*, she was simply swung round to rest more parallel to the shore. In 1930 an attempt was made to scrap the *Thames* but this was also abandoned after parts of her superstructure and the funnels had been removed. The following year *Lorne* was dispersed by explosives.



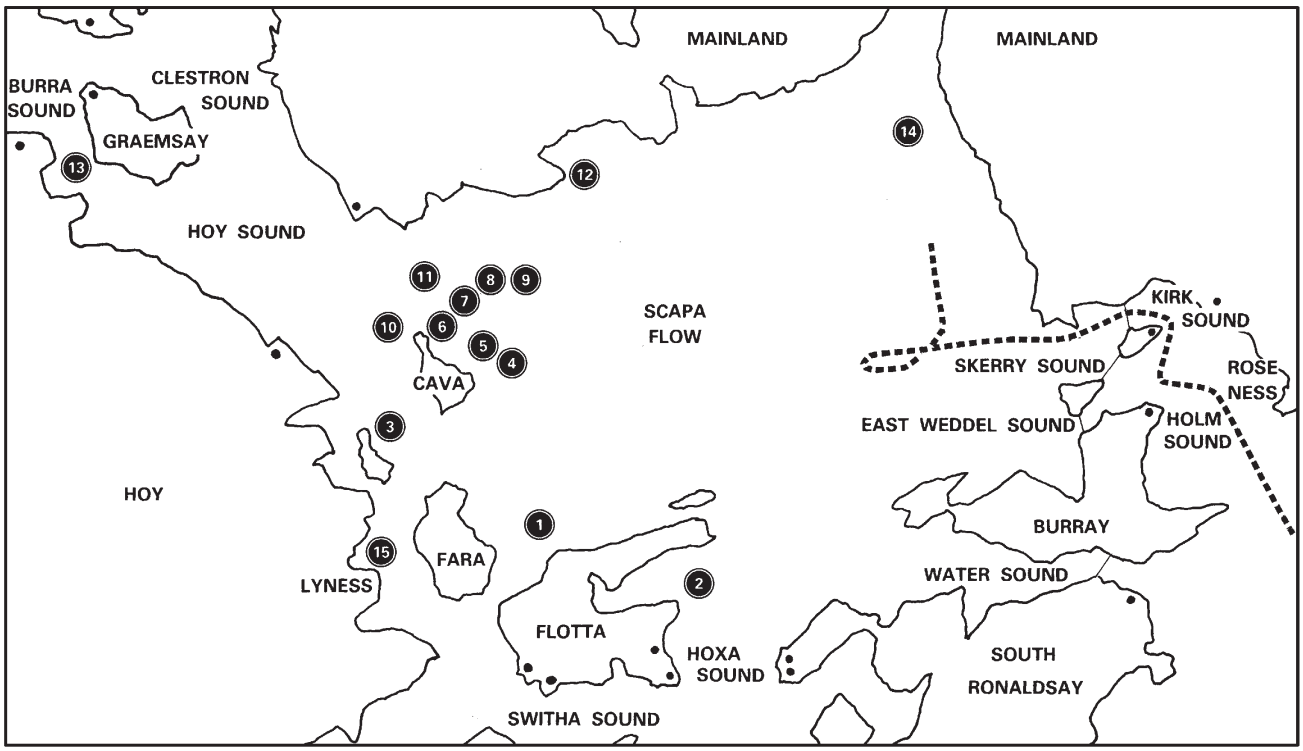
At the end of the war, Scapa Flow was the centre of a momentous event: the internment of the German High Sea Fleet. When a demoralised and mutinous Germany was forced to the negotiating table, the Allies demanded that the bulk of her fleet be interned in a neutral port, but as no suitable one could be found, the choice fell on Scapa Flow. At the end of November 1918, five battle-cruisers, eleven battleships, seven cruisers and fifty destroyers gathered in Scapa Flow, minus ammunition and with their guns rendered inoperative. In command was Vizadmiral Ludwig von Reuter.

Armistice negotiations continued for several months until the Allies issued a final ultimatum to the German delegation at Versailles, threatening the resumption of hostilities whereupon von Reuter gave orders to scuttle the ships. The first to go down on June 21, 1919, was the battleship *Friedrich der Grosse* — the very ship in which the revolution by German sailors had started in 1917, three of her crew being executed.

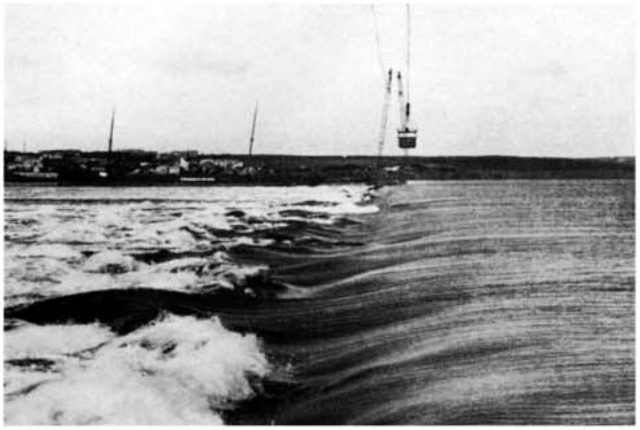
Only a few of the German vessels could be saved by the Royal Navy. The majority lay on the bottom for many years until Ernest Cox bought some of the wrecks in 1924 to begin the ambitious task of raising them for scrap. Never before had ships been salvaged from such depths, and the final wreck to be raised, the battlecruiser *Derfflinger*, was brought to the surface by Cox's successor, Metal Industries, in 1939, leaving three battleships and four cruisers which had sunk in too great a depth to be raised economically. Ironically, the *Derfflinger* was floating upside down alongside the training ship *Iron Duke*, the flagship at Jutland, when the latter was attacked and damaged by the Luftwaffe on October 17, 1939. Another irony was that much of the scrap from the salvaged wrecks was sold back to Germany where it was used to fabricate new weapons as the country began to rearm herself. However, a German request to sell them complete guns was turned down.



The biggest news story of 1919 was the deliberate sinking of the German High Sea Fleet eight months after the surrender in November 1918. Over 70 warships had been interned at Scapa Flow pending conclusion of the armistice negotiations. When in June the German government refused to sign the Peace Treaty, the Allies issued an ultimatum threatening the resumption of hostilities. The deadline was June 21 and at noon Vizadmiral Ludwig von Reuter, the German naval commander of the fleet at Scapa, acted to save his ships from falling into enemy hands. Battle ensigns were run up wherupon the sea cocks were opened. As the vessels, ranging from battleships to torpedo boats, began to settle, some of the British guard-ships, uncertain of what was happening, opened fire causing over 100 casualties. (IWM)

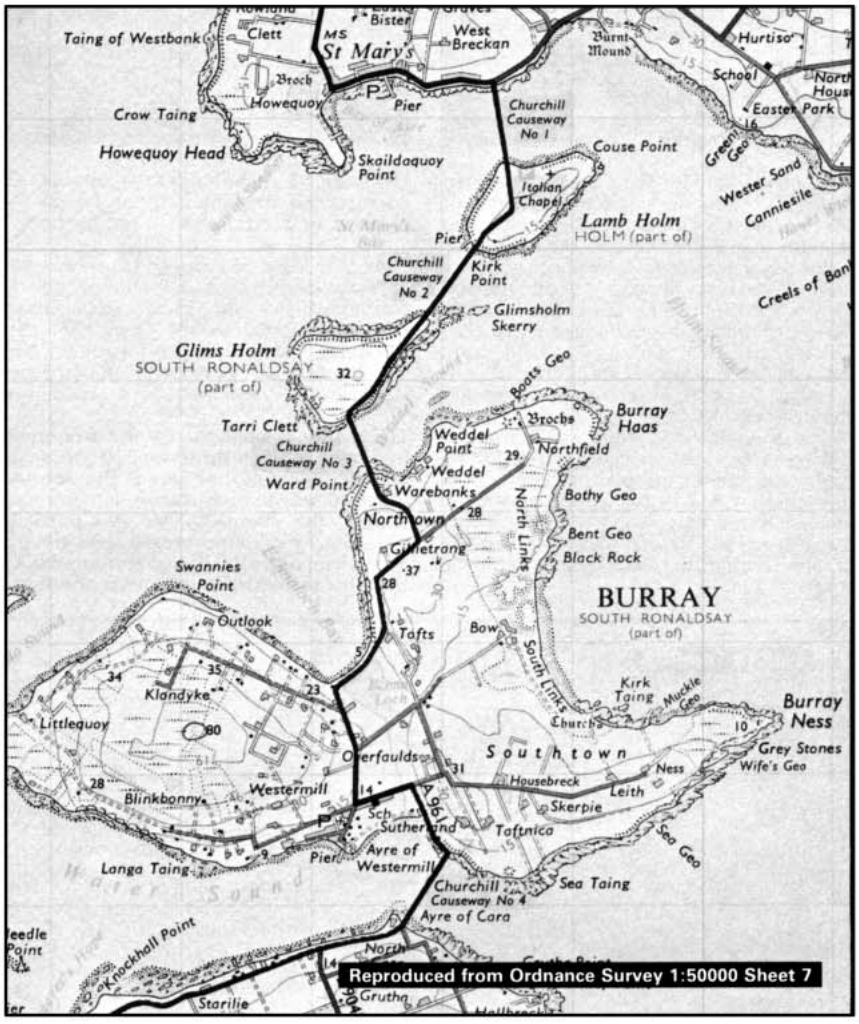


Between the wars, much salvage work was carried out (see *After the Battle* No. 11). This plan shows the main German wrecks which are still present today including the *Royal Oak*, Kapitänleutnant Günther Prien's track through Kirk Sound being shown (dotted). The positions of the Churchill Barriers constructed during WWII are also indicated. The black dots mark coastal batteries. 1. *Vanguard*; 2. *UB-116*; 3. *V83*; 4. *Dresden*; 5. *König*; 6. *Markgraf*; 7. *Krönprinz Wilhelm*; 8. *Brummer*; 9. *Köln*; 10. *Karlsruhe*; 11. Turrets of *Bayern*; 12. Remains of *Bremse*; 13. Blockships; 14. *Royal Oak*; 15. *F2* (sank 1946).

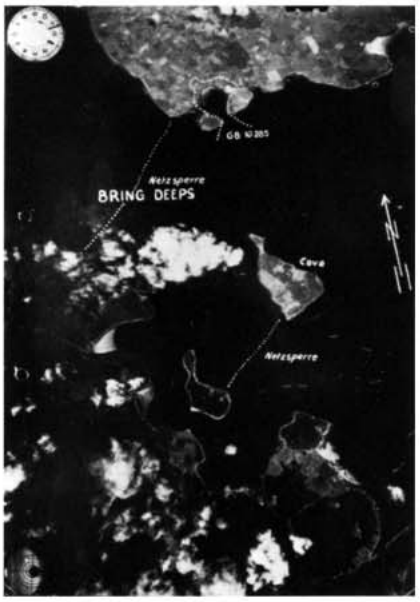


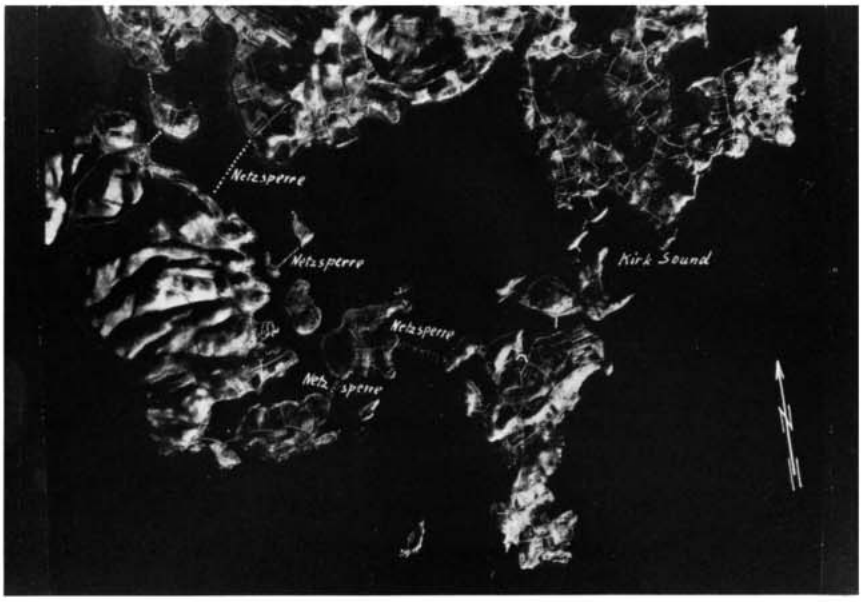
Above left: **This is the 430-yard-wide Kirk Sound, through which Prien entered Scapa on the night of October 13-14, 1939. The *Numidian* can be seen in her post-WWI position lying at a more acute angle to the shore (see plan on page 16). Work is shown just beginning on the construction of Causeway No. 1 on the map. (IWM)** *Above right:* **The Churchill Barrier, permanently sealing the four eastern entrances, was not completed until 1945 — this is Dr Schenk's comparison taken in 1990.**

Meanwhile, with the approach of another war, consideration was given to the improvement of the Scapa Flow defences. The Admiralty found it difficult to buy new blockships at reasonable prices, and by March 1939 only one, the *Seriano*, had been sunk to replace the *Aorangi* in Kirk Sound. A few months later on September 9, *Cape Ortegal* was scuttled in Skerry Sound, closing this gap. A concrete barge, the *Naja*, was sunk to seal the opening in Water Sound but navigable channels still existed in Kirk Sound, and although another blockship for this sound was on the way, it had not yet arrived when war broke out. To improve the obstructions, a taut 12-inch hemp rope and two loose wires of 7- and 6-inch diameter were slung between *Seriano* and *Thames*. Furthermore, a 7-inch wire leading to a 7½-ton anchor was fixed from the stern of *Thames* towards *Seriano* and a 6-inch wire from the stern of *Seriano* to abreast the quarter of *Thames*. Another anchor from *Seriano* was in the process of being stretched to Mainland shore.



Below left: **The Kirk Sound causeway almost complete with the *Numidian* on the right. (IWM)** *Below right:* **The barrier was constructed with huge reinforced concrete blocks to minimise the destructive action of the sea. Alongside, the ballast-filled remains of the *Numidian* still lie just below the surface.**



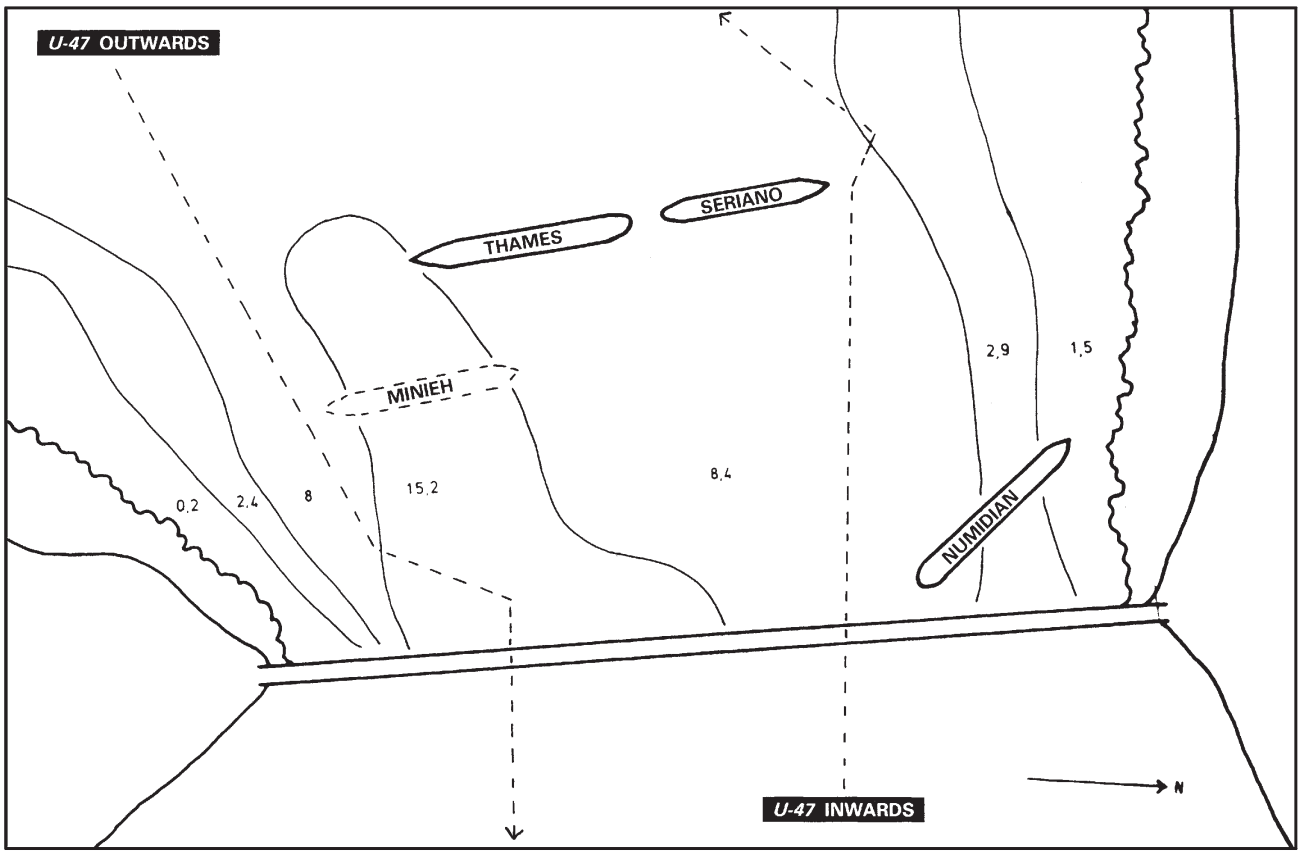


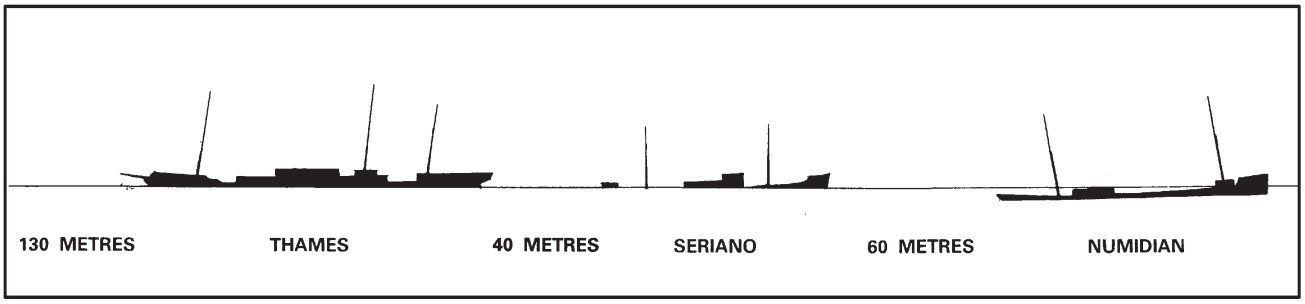
From aerial reconnaissance photos, Department V of the German General Staff constructed a relief map of Scapa Flow. The underwater defences were simply marked as 'Netzsperre' — net barriers.

In the meantime, the Germans had not been idle. Air reconnaissance photos of Scapa Flow taken on September 6 indicated that the barriers protecting the anchorage against submarine attack were not yet complete. To take advantage of the situation, on October 1 the Befehlshaber der U-Boote (C-in-C Submarines) Kapitän zur See Karl Dönitz, therefore asked a U-Boat commander of his choice, Kapitänleutnant Günther Prien, if he considered a breakthrough feasible. Prien had already distinguished himself on his first war patrol by sinking three steamers and, after reflecting on his chances, he accepted the mission the following day. His U-Boat, *U-47*, left Kiel on October 8 and, after passing through the Kiel Canal, she sailed northwards, lying on the bottom during the daytime, maintaining wireless silence.

At 2331 hours on October 13, she surfaced at Rose Ness. In the brightness of the Northern Lights, she entered Holm Sound, first heading for Skerry Sound but then correcting the mistake by turning to Kirk Sound which was thought to offer the best chances of a significant target. The blockships came into sight. Two gaps were navigable, one north of *Seriano*, 60 metres wide and one south of *Thames*, 130 metres wide. Prien decided in favour of the northern opening. By now *U-47* was somewhat behind schedule, past high water, with the tide running with her into the Flow. She passed

The reality in close-up. After the *Numidian* had been swung round in the 1920s, a gap had been opened up some 200 yards wide between it and the *Thames*. Consequently, early in 1939 another vessel, the *Seriano*, was sunk in the deepest part of the channel (over 40 feet at high water), leaving a space of some 45 yards between her stern and that of the *Thames*. This was partially blocked by wire hawsers. Any submarine entering Kirk Sound would thus have to perform a submerged dog-leg around the obstacles, difficult though not impossible for an experienced captain. (The position of the Churchill Barrier is shown although not in existence in October 1939.)





Numidian at a distance of only 15 metres (although Prien identified her as a two-masted schooner because her funnel had gone) and entered the small channel between Mainland and *Seriano*, helped by the current. Suddenly Prien spotted the anchor cable extending obliquely downwards in his path. *U-47* hit the cable which pushed the U-Boat towards the shore, forcing it aground. However, *U-47* was running with her ballast tanks partially filled against just such an emergency and she blew them to gain buoyancy. With the port engine stopped and starboard engine slow ahead, with rudder hard to port, Prien managed to free the boat, the cable scraping along the hull.

Free at last and heading for Scapa Bay, the boat was suddenly lit up by the lights of a car driving down to the village of St Mary. The car stopped, turned, and drove away at high speed. The driver aroused a local police post, telling them he had seen a U-Boat in the bay, but fortunately for Prien they did not believe him.

U-47 continued on her way looking for prey, but the anchorage south of Cava was empty as the bulk of the Home Fleet had left Scapa on the 13th, the last ship away being the *Repulse* which departed at 1700 hours. Only the *Royal Oak* remained behind in Scapa Bay. Meanwhile German Naval Intelligence had also discovered that the Home Fleet had departed but by then it was too late to inform *U-47*.

Turning north, the bridge crew of *U-47* spotted the *Royal Oak* and another ship behind her at the entrance to Scapa Bay. Surprisingly, they identified the second ship — the small seaplane tender *Pegasus* — as the battle-cruiser *Repulse*! (Ernst Dziallas, one of the crew on the bridge that night, today admits having mis-identified the ship but he says that the post-war secrecy ban on releasing British records, and even in talks with survivors of *Royal Oak* right up until the 1970s, all contributed to the speculation about the identity of the second ship.)

At 0058 *U-47* loosed off three torpedoes, two at *Royal Oak* and one at the other ship. Only one exploded, near the bow of *Royal Oak*, having hit the anchor chain although Prien believed he had hit the second ship. *U-47* then turned and fired its stern torpedo, without effect. On board the *Royal Oak*, the explosion was thought to have occured in the inflammable stores in the bow of the ship.

As no alarm had sounded, Prien decided to reload and attack the *Royal Oak* from close range. At 0129 hours, three torpedoes left *U-47* and hit the battleship fair and square and she sank about a quarter of an hour later taking 833 men with her. Luckily for the survivors, the mail boat *Daisy II* had arrived late on this particular night and many crew members of the *Royal Oak* were still up waiting for their mail. *Daisy II* was still alongside when the battleship sank and she took on board most of the survivors.

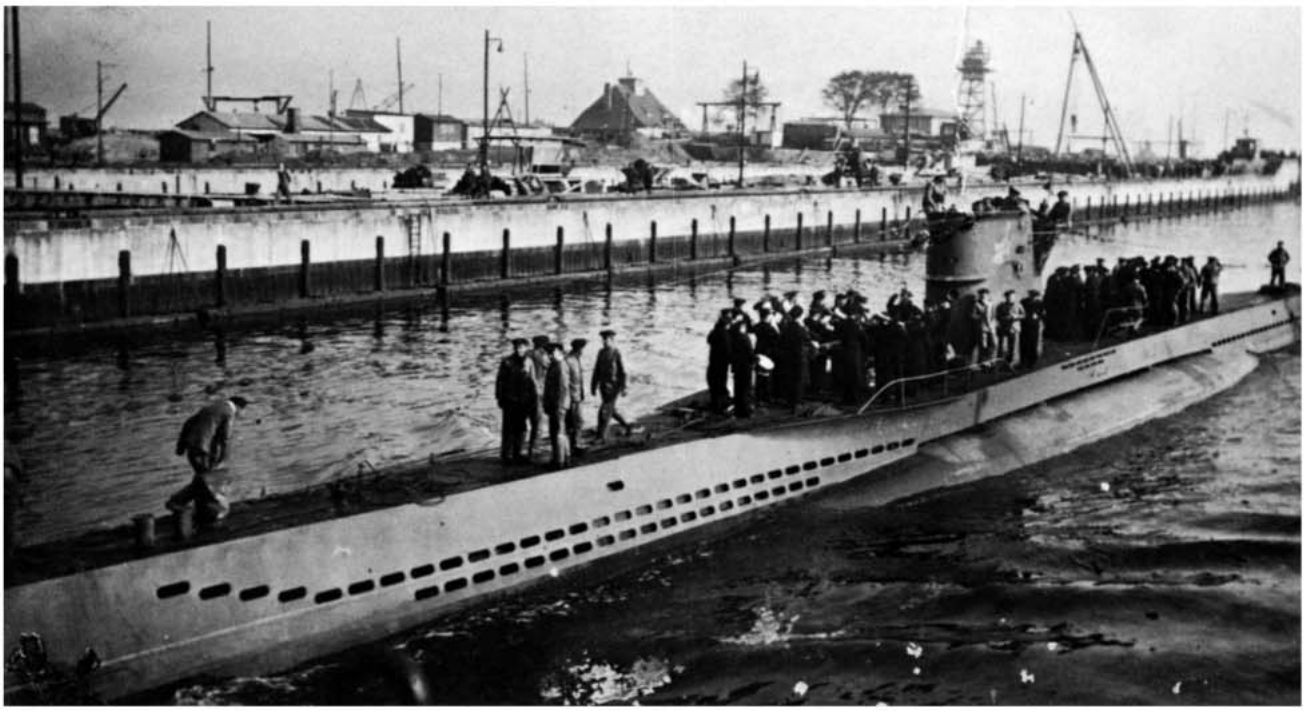
U-47 retreated at high speed. On her way out she used the southern channel in Kirk Sound south of *Thames*. Here the wreck of *Minieh* was lying completely submerged in the deepest stretch of Kirk Sound. She had not shown up on the German reconnaissance photos and Dönitz speaks in his diary of only three blockships. (In photos taken in 1920 only a single mast was visible which must have disappeared by 1939.) *U-47* passed close to, or even right over the top of, the *Minieh*, luckily for her without striking the wreck but nevertheless struggling at full power against the incoming tide. Free of the blockships, she then found herself in front of a jetty at Lambs Holm which she narrowly avoided. Finally, *U-47* was out in the open sea, her mission accomplished.

A few days later on October 21, the blockship *Lake Neuchatel* was sunk south of *Thames*. More ships followed: the *Busk*, *Tabarka*, *Redstone* and *Gambhira* which firmly closed Kirk Sound. Further ships were sunk in the other Sounds and to make the eastern Sounds absolutely impregnable, from the summer of 1941 on, dams called 'Churchill barriers' were constructed across their entrances out of rock and concrete blocks to form a permanent closure.

The captain, personally selected by the chief of the U-Boat arm, Kapitän zur See Karl Dönitz, was Günther Prien who had already sunk three ships on his first patrol. This would have been his periscope's-eye-view as he entered the Sound.

However, after successfully negotiating the anti-submarine defences, Prien was dismayed to find that the British fleet reported at Scapa had vanished. (It had fortuitously been withdrawn to Loch Ewe on the west coast of Scotland.) The only ships left were the 25-year-old battleship *Royal Oak (above)*, and a tender which Ernst Dziallas mis-identified as the *Repulse* — another ex-WWI battleship (later sunk by the Japanese).

The attack sent the *Royal Oak* to the bottom within fifteen minutes with the loss of 833 lives. Today the ship is a protected war grave, the White Ensign still 'flying' from her port outer propeller shaft. (Peter Smith)



The *U-47* at Wilhelmshaven. After returning to base, the crew were flown, via Kiel, to Berlin. (Sammlung Jung)

PRIEN RETURNS

On October 17, *U-47* entered Wilhelmshaven and was received by Admirals Ernst Raeder and Alfred Saalwächter and Kapitän sur See Dönitz. Raeder announced that Prien had been awarded the Knight's Cross and Dönitz was promoted to Admiral. That same afternoon the crew of *U-47* was flown to Kiel.

The following day they were taken on to Berlin in three aircraft, Prien flying in Hitler's personal FW200 Condor. Shortly before 11.00 a.m. he was welcomed at Tempelhof airport by Kapitän zur See Leopold Siemens, the commander of the submarine department of Naval High Command. Siemens welcomed them, declaring that: 'You have left the world wondering and given the unteachable persons [the British] a big scare.'

On the way to Hotel Kaiserhof on the Wilhelmplatz near the Reichskanzlei, the crew, in a column of cars, was cheered enthusiastically by the crowds. Prien and his crew were introduced to Hitler in his office and, after several speeches, the Führer decorated Prien with the Ritterkreuz and the crew with First or Second Class grades of the Iron Cross.

The crew arrive at Tempelhof: 1. Ob.Lt.z.S. Amelung von Varendorff third in command); 2. Obersteuermann Wilhelm Spahr; 3. Stabs.Ob.Maschinist Otto Strunk; 4. Bootsmaat Willy Meyer; 5. O.Masch.Maat Kurt Bleeck; 6. Bootsmaat Ernst Dziallas; 7. Masch.Gefr. Peter Dittmer; 8. Masch.Ob.Gefr. Gerd Hänsel; 9. Ob.Lt.Ing. Hans Wessel.

Led by the youthful Kapitänleutnant Prien, the men march in triumphant procession to the Reichs Chancellery and their audience with Hitler. *Left:* **Here they are passing Voss-strasse on the corner of the Wilhelmsplatz.** *Right:* **In 1989 there was nothing to relate to the picture the Hoffmann organisation took on October 18, 1939.**

The captain presents his crew to Hitler and Grossadmiral Raeder (standing on left with back to camera). In the line-up (L–R): Ob.Lt.Ing. Hans Wessels; Ob.Lt.z.S. Engelbert Endrass (second in command); Ob.Lt.z.S. Amelung von Varendorff; Obersteuermann Wilhelm Spahr; Stabsmachinist Gustav Böhm; Bootsmaat Willy Meyer; Bootsmaat Ernst Dziallas; Ob.Funkmaat Hans Blank (behind); Ob.Masch.Maat Kurt Bleeck; Masch.Maat Werner Scholz (behind); Masch.Gefr. Peter Dittmer; Masch.Gefr. Kurt Brehme (behind); Masch.Ob.Gefr. Karl Spörer; Ob.Funk.Gefr. Herbert Hebestreit.

Lunch was partaken in Hitler's private rooms and in the afternoon Prien and his crew were received by Reichspressechef, Dr Otto Dietrich, in the nearby Ministry of Propaganda where a press conference was held. In his speech, Prien emphasised the fact that, besides sinking *Royal Oak*, he had seen and hit the *Repulse*: 'I definitely recognised the *Repulse* by her silhouette. It is given in every handbook on the British fleet.'

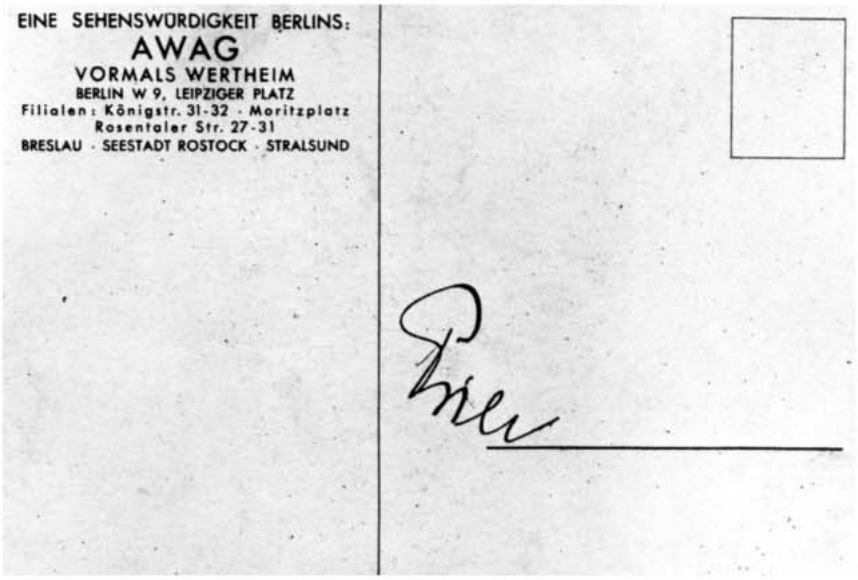
Lunchtime conversation at the top table does not appear very animated. Hitler is flanked by Prien wearing his brand new Knight's Cross, and Masch.Ob.Gefr. Ernst Schmidt with the Iron Cross 2nd Class. On Prien's right, Masch.Ob.Gefr. Karl Spörer, and on Schmidt's left, Masch. Ob.Gefr. Gerd Hänsel, Friedrich Schmidt, Werner Lüddecke. Bootsmaat Willy Meyer and Ernst Dziallas on the corner.

Left: **A press conference was held during the afternoon in the Ministry of Propaganda. Here the Reichspressechef, Dr Otto Dietrich, introduces Prien, the man who torpedoed the 'Schlachtschiff *Royal Oak* and Schlacht-Kreuzer *Repulse*'.** *Right:* **Girls of the Bund Deutscher Mädel at the Hotel Kaiserhof with, left, the *U-47*'s cook, Friedrich Walz, and Peter Dittmer.**

That evening, Hitler invited the crew of *U-47* to attend a show at the famous Wintergarten variety theatre near Friedrichstrasse where the crew was received by the traditional march, *Flaggenlied*. The cheering audience called on Prien for a speech and the German broadcasting service seized the opportunity to put the proceedings on the air for its programme 'Wunschkonzert'. The radio presenter passed on congratulations from Servicemen and civilians alike and announced that public donations had been received by the crew of 50,000 RM.

Norbert Kelling, then 8½-years-old, was at the show: 'On the evening of October 18, 1939, I accompanied my parents to the Wintergarten. During the show, a rumour spread among the audience that Kapitänleutnant Prien and his crew would appear. The main door opened and the band started to play. The audience rose from their seats as Prien entered, accompanied by his wife as well as his crew. They were led through the cheering audience to their seats in the first rows. The wireless program 'Wunschkonzert' was switched to the microphones of the show. During the interval, Prien was beseiged by people asking for autographs. My mother succeeded in getting one for me and I proudly showed this to my class-mates in school. The enthusiasm for Prien in Germany can only be compared with Britain's love for Admiral Nelson.

The welcome for the men of *U-47* at the Wintergarten was rapturous. Prominent in the front row is Oberleutnant zur See von Varendorf with his mother (seated); Prien's wife, Ingeborg, and Dr Goebbels.



Norbert Kelling's treasured autograph of one of Germany's greatest heroes.

'I always kept the postcard with his autograph in my small suitcase with my favourite toys which I never forgot to take with me into the shelter during the bombing raids on Berlin in the years which followed. So it is today that I still possess the autograph in spite of being bombed out and evacuated from Berlin.'

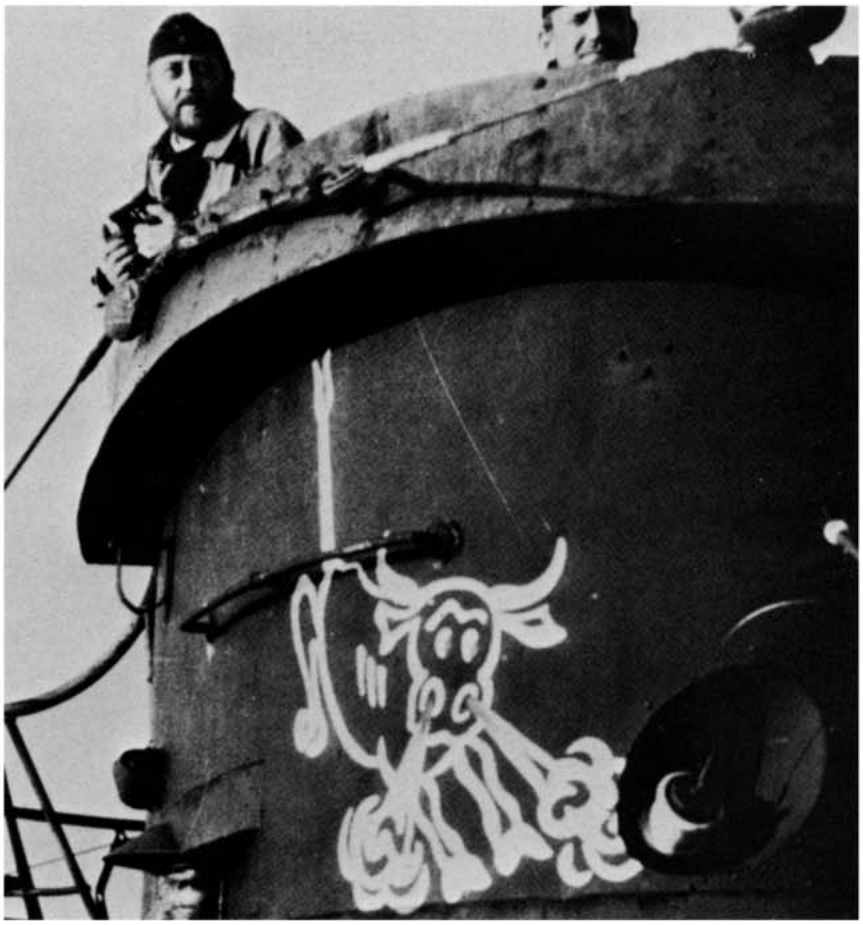
After spending the night in Hotel Kaiserhof, the crew of *U-47* was awakened by a band of the Marine Hitler Youth and before leaving Berlin, they were received by Generalfeldmarschall Hermann Göring. On October 23, *U-47* sailed to Kiel to be honoured by a great part of the German fleet assembled there. The next day the submarine entered Friedrich Krupp Germaniawerft at Kiel for a refit.

Prien and the *U-47* returned to sea in the middle of November and he went on to become the first U-Boat commander to sink over 200,000 tons. On October 20, 1940, he became only the fifth member of the German armed forces to be awarded the Oak Leaves to his Knights' Cross. (The others were Eduard Dietl — see page 32 — and Werner Mölders, Adolf Galland and Helmut Wick for exploits during the air war on England.) However, five months later Prien's luck ran out when the *U-47* was depth-charged by the destroyer *Wolverine* west of the Faroes. The news that Prien was missing was withheld against the faint hope that his silence might simply be due to wireless failure. However, when the *U-47* failed to return by the middle of April, there could be no doubt, yet the deaths of Prien and his crew were still not publicly admitted until May 23. Admiral Dönitz issued an order of the day: 'Günther Prien, the hero of Scapa Flow, has made his last patrol. We submariners bow our heads with pride and sorrow, in tribute to him and his men. Even though the vast ocean hides him, Prien still stands in our midst. No U-Boat will go to sea against the West but he will sail with her, his spirit will bear her company. No blow against England will be struck by us but his aggressive spirit will guide our hand. Ebullient with youthful vigour and reckless courage, he is an eternal pattern for all U-Boat men. We have lost him and recovered him; he has become for us the symbol of our hard and remorseless will to vanquish England. The fight will continue in his spirit.' *Right:* Thereafter Prien's own emblem — the 'Bull of Scapa Flow' — was adopted throughout his old unit, the 7. Flotille.

THE FATE OF THE *U-47*

After her successful sortie to Scapa Flow, *U-47* had seven more equally successful patrols in the Atlantic where she sank 24 ships in convoy battles and damaged several others. After her eighth sortie, Prien was summoned for a second time to Hitler and on October 31, 1940 was decorated with Oak Leaves to his Knight's Cross — only the fifth officer of the Wehrmacht to be so honoured.

In 1941, on his last patrol, *U-47* spotted Convoy OB 290 and sank three ships and damaged another. Then, in the early hours of March 8, the destroyer *Wolverine* with Commander J. W. Rowland, guarding Convoy OB 293, saw a submarine which dived as she neared. After releasing depth charges, oil was seen on the surface and several hours later the sound of screws was heard on *Wolverine*. Following the track, a U-Boat was sighted on the surface. She quickly submerged, turning as she did so, but the manoeuvre was spotted by the destroyer which was upon her when she was at a depth of only 15 metres. Although no signs of oil or wreckage were found, and another contact was made with ASDIC which was proved to be caused by dolphins, it was later assumed that this was the end of *U-47*. On hunting the dolphins, a small light was observed for a few seconds on this very spot. Prien had fought his final battle.



The detritus of war rusts away amid the Orkney landscape. This is the wreckage of the *Elton* and *Cape Ortegal* (left) and a salvage pontoon in Skerry Sound.

SCAPA FLOW TODAY

The remoteness of the Orkney Islands, together with their haunting history right from the prehistoric period, has always had a great attraction for me. On my first visit to these treeless, windswept islands in 1972 I did not pay too much attention to the barriers and blockships in the eastern Sounds although I noted that the ships in Kirk Sound had gone. However, a lasting interest was awakened by reading books on the salvage of the German fleet and the sinking of the *Royal Oak*, especially the one by Korganoff, *The Phantom of Scapa Flow*, although I learned during research for this article that it contained several errors. On my return to the islands in October 1990, I noted that the character of the place had changed with the development of the economy through tourism and the oil-terminal built on Flotta. Diving on the remaining German ships had become popular and several diving companies have been founded.

All the coastal gun emplacements built during the Second World War can still be seen and are in good condition. However, not much remains to be seen of the blockships, as most of them were scrapped in the 1950s. In Burra Sound, only the tanker *Inverlane* is visible. The most interesting

Ness Battery overlooking Clestrain Sound at the western end of Scapa Flow.

And below the waves the remains of the *Royal Oak*. *Left:* The spotting top lying on its side on the sea bed, viewed as though looking up the foremast from the port side of the compass platform. *Right:* No. 2 port 6-inch casemate gun. (Peter Smith)

Blockships in East Weddel Sound near Causeway No. 3. *Left:* **The *Martis* and *Empire Seamen* and,** *right*, **the *Reginald*.**

wrecks lay in Water Sound with *Carron* to the north, the old *Pontos* from the first World War with her wooden mast in the middle, and *Collingdoc*, a former Great Lakes steamer, to the south. In East Weddel Sound the stern section of the former schooner, *Reginald* can still be seen whereas on the western side of the barrier, *Empire Seamen*, the former German *Morea*, which was captured in 1940, to the north and *Martis* to the south show only at low tide. The steam engine and the forward bottom of *Lycia* can be distinguished in Skerry Sound, but the best preserved item is a salvage pontoon, not perhaps used as a blockship, but for raising them after the war. Some other wrecks, among which is one with an upright mast, are difficult to identify with certainty.

Nothing is visible on the surface of the most interesting anchorage as far as the story of the *U-47* is concerned, Kirk Sound. However, on diving, I recognised the bottom of the *Numidian*, a few metres below the surface, still filled with ballast. The spot where *Aorangi* was grounded in 1920 is bare today with only a boiler lying on the shore off Holm Kirkyard.

The *Carron* lies partially beached on the shore of Water Sound, the southernmost entrance to Scapa sealed by Causeway No. 4.

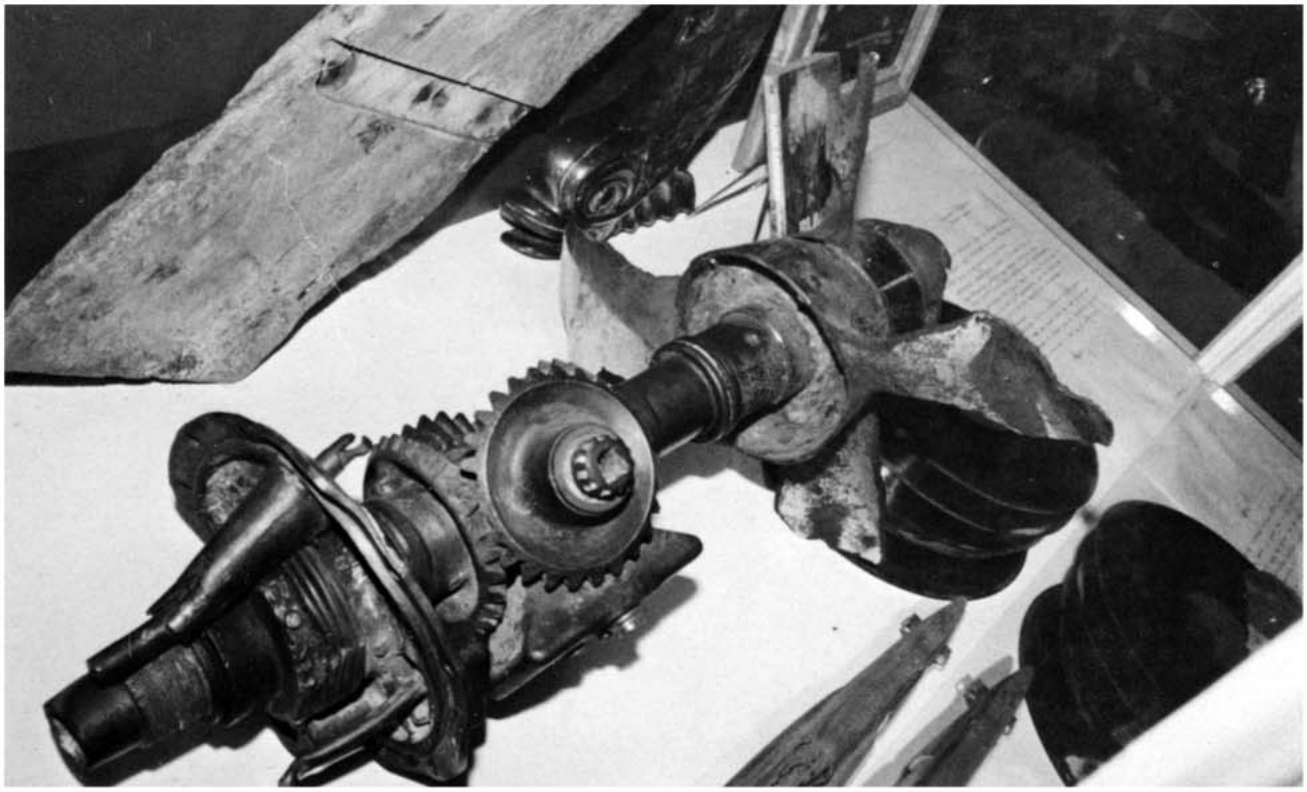
***Pontos* in Water Sound.**

The boiler from the *Aorangi* salvaged in 1920 at Holm Kirkyard.

Stromness Museum has an extensive collection of relics from naval history in and around the Orkneys. *Above:* Artifacts raised from ships of the German High Sea Fleet after the First World War include the bell from the cruiser *Dresden*.

The Churchill Barriers were as much a tribute to the men who built them as to the man whose name they bore. Several hundred Italians captured in North Africa were sent to Camp 60, located on Lambs Holm — the most northerly island in Holm Sound (see map page 15) — where they toiled to build the 1½ miles of causeway from over 60,000 concrete blocks of five and ten tons apiece. *Left:* Part of Causeway No. 2 sealing Skerry Sound with the wreck of the *Lycia* alongside. Unidentified wreckage in the background. *Right:* Remains of some of the wooden concrete block moulds photographed by Peter Smith.

In the Italian PoW camp, one of the huts was set aside for use as a chapel which was ornately decorated by one of their number, Domencio Chiochetti. Today it is the only part of the camp to have survived, Signor Chiochetti having returned in 1960 to carry out restoration work. His skill and artistry were outstanding; for example, all the 'stones' in the interior are painted reproductions on the cladding covering the corrugated iron. A unique legacy of a unique period in the Islands' history.



Surviving relics of the attack on the *Royal Oak* — one British, one German. *Above:* **In Stromness Museum can be seen the remains of the propulsion unit from one of Prien's torpedos, recovered in later years from the seabed.** *Below:* **The ship's bell now hangs in Kirkwall Cathedral as a memorial to the 833 sailors who lost their lives.**

On the north-east coast of Mainland, the Kitchener Tower commemorates the death of Lord Kitchener who was on board the cruiser *Hampshire* which struck a German mine and sank with most of her crew off Mainland on June 5, 1916. Kitchener was on a mission to Russia and there was a considerable amount of gold on board to support Britain's ally. At the beginning of the 1930s a British salvage company began preparations to recover the gold with the assistance of the former German submarine commander, Kurt Beitzen, who had laid the mines. He had found his diary with the position of the mines in his old uniform jacket in the attic of his home and he joined the recovery project.

The wreck was soon found and work began using special steel diving suits made by the German company, Draeger, designed to combat the heavy water pressure at great depths. A hole was blown in the hull and most of the gold was recovered but then a diving accident occurred with several fatal casualties, among them the German submarine commander.

For the historically-minded visitor, several museums are a must, especially the one in Stromness where relics from the salvaged German ships, and even some from *Royal Oak* and a torpedo tail from *U-47*, are on show. In the beautiful cathedral at Kirkwall, the bell of *Royal Oak* has been preserved with a memorial plaque to her victims.

Several years ago, another attempt was made to recover items from the *Hampshire* but, as prior permission had not been obtained, the company had to forfeit the salvaged items, amongst which was a propeller and a gun which are now exhibited at the former naval base at Lyness on Hoy where a small museum has been established. A 15cm gun from the *Bremse* can be seen outside. It is also planned to establish a railway museum with two small gauge steam engines of the type in use on Hoy during the war years. On South Ronalsay another museum specialising in wireless equipment from the war years has been established.

AMERICAN RED CROSS FIELD HOSPITAL UNIT

By Lois Simon

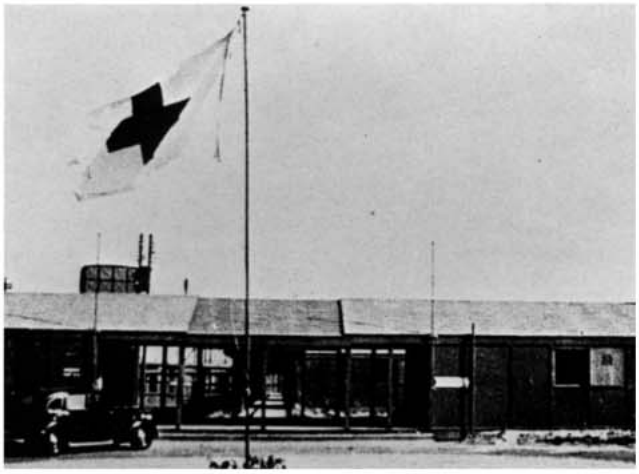
Immediately upon the outbreak of war in September 1939, the then President of Harvard University, James Conant, made the decision to offer a medical unit of some kind to the British, the exact form of which would be decided by the British Ministry of Health. The decision was quickly made as the great need was for a laboratory and hospital for the study and care of communicable diseases. It was known that air raids on the civilian population were a distinct possibility and that air raid shelters could be a breeding ground for contagious diseases. Dr John Gordon, head of the Harvard Public Health Unit, was made Director of the project.

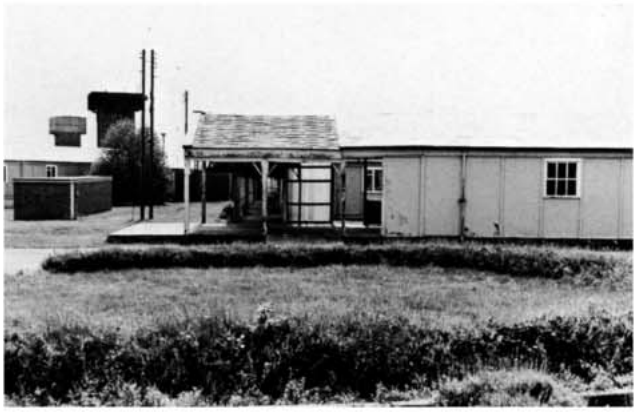
The American Red Cross was consulted and agreed to construct, finance and provide the nursing and non-professional staff for a 125-bed hospital. The buildings were to be of a pre-fabricated hut type, planned, ordered and shipped to England down to the last nut and bolt. It was decided to find a hill site where the huts would blend into the countryside, away from the London area, but with good rail and road connections. Accordingly, a suitable site was found on the outskirts of Salisbury in Wiltshire.

Recruitment was started, nurses from many of the leading nursing and public health schools were invited to join the unit. I remember I was approached in October 1940 and told to be ready to leave by December 12 but difficulty in getting shipping space and loss of some equipment at sea delayed our leaving. Finally I sailed with a group of twelve nurses and technicians in an 8,000-ton Dutch freighter on May 30, 1941 in a convoy of about fifty ships plus escort, taking 23 days for the crossing. Personnel left about once a week until the full complement of sixty nurses, eight laboratory technicians, several secretaries, a librarian, etc., plus twelve doctors were in England. There was a great deal of U-Boat activity at that time, and most of the convoys had some enemy action. We lost five nurses and our house-mother as a result of torpedoing, others spent twelve and nineteen days respectively in lifeboats, five of whom were invalided back to the US after landing in Iceland and Northern Ireland.

As the hospital was still not ready to accept patients when we arrived, we nurses were assigned to various British hospitals to work on the wards, difficult at first but in the end a rewarding experience. The public health staff spent the summer in Bristol

Harvard Hospital, sent piecemeal from the US, takes shape at Harnham Hill on the southern outskirts of Salisbury in 1941.



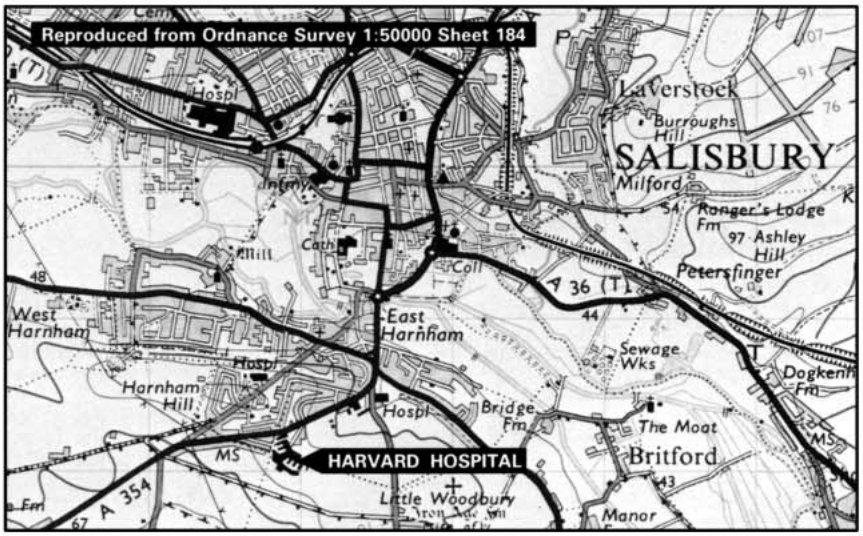


The main entrance — these striking comparisons taken for us by Henry Wills, the pillbox expert (see issues Nos. 14 and 25).

where there was a para-typhoid epidemic which they successfully tracked down to its source. We moved down to Salisbury in September and admitted our first patient on September 23.

The British people stayed remarkably healthy, and fortunately no epidemics occurred, although we had a few cases of measles and mumps, mostly involving children who had been evacuated from London, and soldiers from the camps on Salisbury Plain, with an occasional brucellosis or trichinosis.

With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7 of that year America entered the war, and the hospital was turned over to the US Army in July 1942, being renamed the 1st General Medical Laboratory. We nurses were given the choice of returning to the States or joining the Army Nurse Corps in England. About half of us opted to join the Army and about half of those requested transfers to Field Hospitals or Evacuation Hospitals. The rest of us stayed on in Salisbury, joined the US Army Blood Bank, and went to Paris in September 1944.



Left: **Another picture taken in the early days in 1941 as the American staff enjoy a typical British recreation.** *Above:* **Anne and James Dalton, with son Jim, re-create the scene for Henry's camera. Anne was a medical officer at the Common Cold Research Centre set up at the hospital after the war.**

When the United States entered the war, the American Red Cross handed the hospital over to its Army and, from July 1942, Harvard Hospital became known as the 1st General Medical Laboratory. About 20 of the original American Red Cross nurses chose to transfer to the Army with the rank of second lieutenant. *Above:* **One of the less-appreciated duties for the girls was the daily drill in full combat gear!**

At the end of the war, the US Army gave the buildings at Salisbury to the Ministry of Health which used the complex to set up the Harvard Common Cold Research Centre. So the well-equipped laboratories we had were put to good use, with the personnel huts being used to house volunteers who agreed to be infected with cold viruses and live in isolation for ten days.

The Common Cold Unit continued in being at Salisbury for 44 years, conducting research on more than 18,000 human guinea-pigs. However, a cure for the common cold proved elusive and, with the budget of the Medical Research Council being squeezed, it was decided that the £500,000 the unit cost annually could be better spent elsewhere. On Saturday, June 30, 1990, the research unit closed its doors for the last time, with the intention of developing this unique site for housing.

Teresa Borthwick-Clarke of the Common Cold Unit pictured on the same 'parade ground' shortly before the research centre discharged its last human guinea-pig in June 1990. With the ending of the long-running cold project, the original buildings are now due to be demolished — a sad end to a unique piece of wartime Britain.

Left: **Our author, Lois Schaller (as she then was) right, with Anne Sundby (now Mrs Derifield of Michigan). This picture (like the one *above* of three other American nurses at Harvard) was taken in the spring of 1942 when they were still in American Red Cross uniform.**

In September 1944, Lois went to Paris with the ETO Blood Bank, returning to the States at the end of the war. After six months she came back to England to rejoin her husband, a British officer she had married in February 1944. Meanwhile the hospital at Salisbury had been relinquished by the US Army and presented to the British Medical Research Council, subsequently becoming the centre for the search into a cure for the common cold. Although the unit failed to come up with a solution, it established that colds are spread by more than 100 different viruses. In 1988 Lois and another ex-US Red Cross nurse now resident in Britain, Martha Gee (née Reis), heard that the unit was due to be shut down and they decided to organise a special reunion. *Below:* This took place in October 1989, when 27 former doctors, nurses and technicians travelled from as far afield as Alaska and Hawaii. The greatest surprise for the visitors was that the buildings were still standing. Commented one: 'They were built to last ten years, yet they have had about fifty!'

THE DEATH OF GENERALOBERST DIETL

By Ron Gamage

A number of countries have elite troops and in many instances they have a battle cry. The German Gebirgsjäger, or mountain troops, in the Second World War had such a cry: 'Hurra die Gams' — Hooray the Chamois — a nimble deer whose habitat is the most isolated mountain regions, and is able to traverse the most difficult terrain. Such a description admirably fits the rôle of the Gebirgsjäger who were expected to live and fight in the most inhospitable mountainous regions.

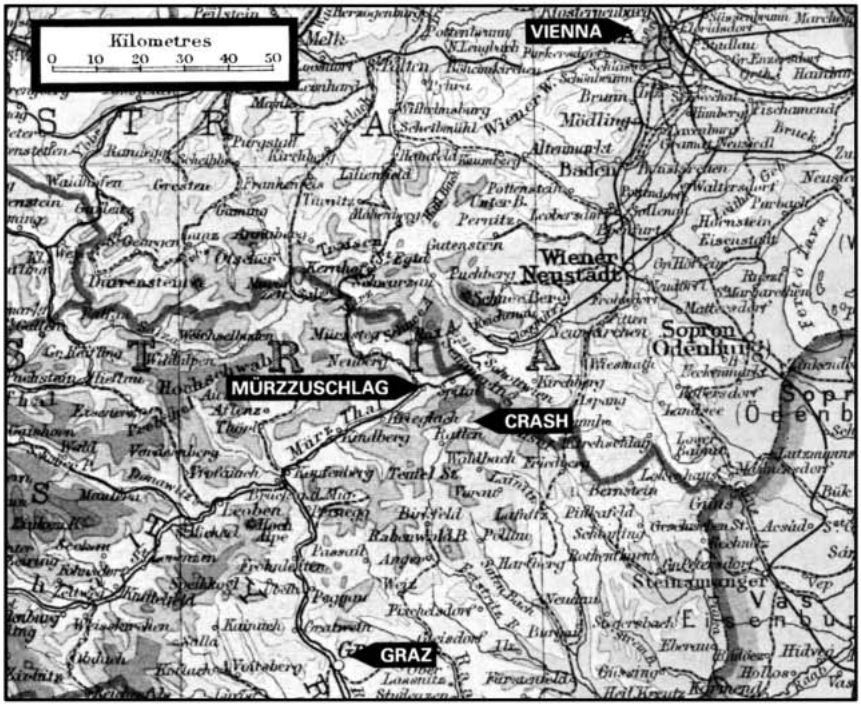
The principal distinction between the Gebirgsjäger and the rest of the infantry formations of the German Army was the terrain in which their formations served. Poland, Norway, France, the Balkans, Crete, Russia and Italy saw the Gebirgsjäger in action in most of their mountain regions.

They were formed in the Tyrol area where the borders of Germany and Austria meet. Their specialised training included mountaineering, rock climbing and skiing, and the Gebirgsjäger were issued with standard equipment plus such items as ice axes, grapples, ropes and tackle. The most distinctive uniform item was the Edelweiss flower which they used as an emblem which made them stand out from other infantry units and they wore the badge in cloth on the sleeves of their uniform jackets. The badge in metal was also worn on the front of the peaked cap or to the side on their soft cloth cap. The outer garments they wore, such as reversible smocks and camouflage jackets, were to be copied after the war by many countries.

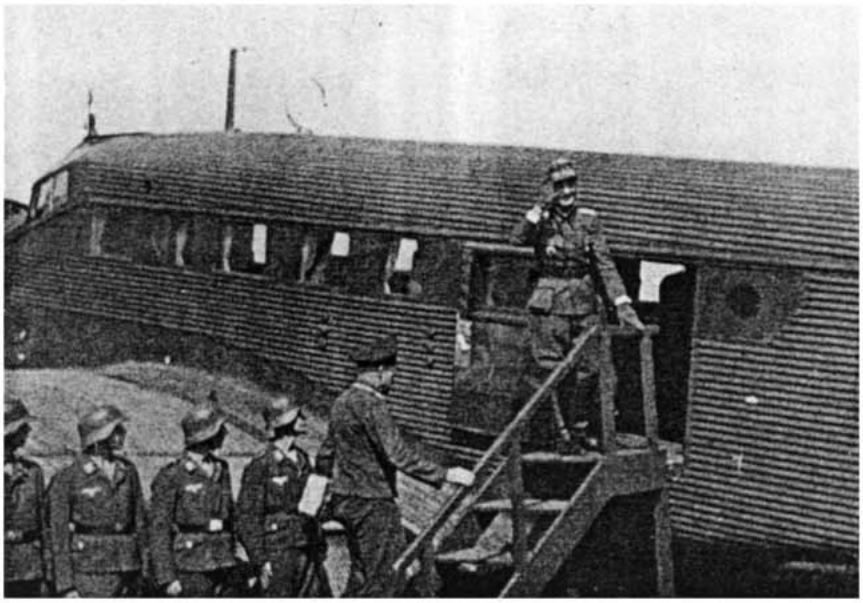
In 1989 one of the minor political parties in West Germany campaigned to have the name of one of the army barracks, Bundeswehrkaserne Dietl, changed, alleging that it was named after a Nazi, Generaloberst Eduard Wolrath Dietl. The allegation appeared to be based on the fact that in 1943 he had been awarded the NSDAP badge in gold. Who then was this man Dietl? What had he done to be honoured and remembered in this fashion? Was he a Nazi?

Dietl was born on July 21, 1890, in Bad Aibling, and began school at the age of six. Until he was nineteen years of age he went to the Grammar School in Rosenheim. On October 1, 1909, he enlisted as a cadet in the 5th Infantry Regiment at Bamberg, and his progress in his chosen career was such that within two years he was made an officer.

Serving throughout the First World War, he was awarded the Iron Cross First Class in 1916 and the Wound Badge in Silver in 1917. At the end of hostilities he remained in the Army, achieving steady progress until in 1938 he was promoted to Generalmajor in command of the 8. Gebirgsjäger Division



It is always tragic when an adventurous fighting man — especially someone who has lived through so much action — loses his life in an accident. Such was the case with Eduard Dietl, veteran of WWI and hero of Narvik in 1940 who was killed in a plane crash in June 1944. Although the short hop from Graz to Vienna would have taken barely an hour by the more easterly route avoiding the mountains, instead the aircraft took the direct course . . . to disaster.



The last goodbye as the Ju 52 prepares for take-off. The route was first to the north to Judenburg, then north-east along the

Semmering railway line to the Mürzzuschlag — a mountain range some 1600 metres high (over 5,000 feet).

stationed at Graz, Austria. Prior to this he had commanded and trained various mountain units, proving himself to be a superb mountaineer. Although he drove his men hard, he earned their admiration and respect through his ability, personality and loyalty to his men. Whenever he returned from a rest area, he always distributed tobacco and confectionery to his troops in the front line.

Following active service in Poland in September 1939, Dietl and his men were destined for Norway where all their hard training paid off in a far-from-easy victory during the battle at Narvik. Dubbed the 'Hero of Narvik', Dietl was awarded the Knight's Cross in May 1940, By this time a Generalleutnant, Dietl was further honoured two months later when he became the first person to be awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross. Further promotion followed to the rank of General der Infanterie. Now in command of the 20. Gebirgs-Armee, over the next four years he and his Gebirgsjäger fought in Finland and Lapland, in the meantime Dietl earned further advancement to Generaloberst, and, as mentioned, the NSDAP gold party badge in 1943.

Near the little village of Rettenegg the aircraft entered cloud and came to grief on the mountainside at Hartberg am Semmering. Ron Gamage explains that the place where the aircraft came down is very difficult to find and that he was only

able to reach the spot with the help of a local guide. He strongly recommends any reader wishing to visit the crash site to ask for assistance in Rettenegg, the nearest village. Once on the right track, these markers point the way.

Dietl met his death in a tragic and probably unnecessary flying accident in June 1944 after visiting Adolf Hitler at Obersalzberg. It was Dietl's intention after his visit to return to Norway by air via Graz and Vienna. On June 23 he took off from Graz together with a number of other military personnel: General Karl Eglseer, General Franz Rossi, General Thomas-Emil von Wickede, Oberleutnant Kowalik, Oberleutnant Jakob, Oberleutnant Altfield, Oberfeldwebel Meyer and Feldwebel Huber. The aircraft they were flying in was the tri-motor Junkers Ju 52, an aircraft with a known reputation for its reliability and flying characteristics, albeit rather slow.

The pre-flight weather report from the Graz meteorological office predicted cloud cover from 500 metres to about 2500 metres. Consequently, the pilot was advised to fly around the Alps over the plains on his approach to Vienna. This was sound advice for although Dietl's pilot was not inexperienced, he did not have the necessary qualifications for flying over mountainous terrain. However, Dietl was missing his mountains and he instructed the pilot to fly the more direct route over the Alps which would be a change from the flatness of Finland. He pointed out that the clouds were high and that he knew the ranges well.

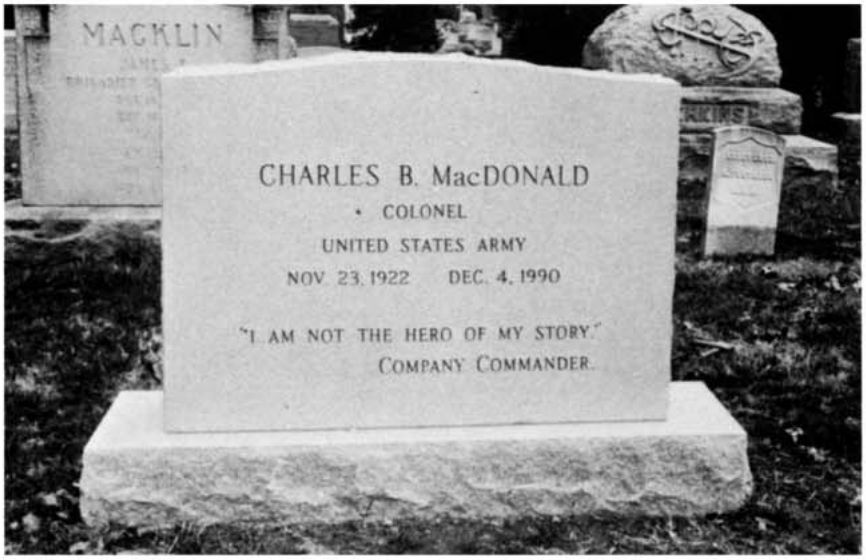
The pilot did as he was told. From Graz they flew over the valley to Judenburg and then along the Semmering railway line over Mürzzuschlag. At Mürzzuschlag the ground rises very sharply and, as a result of the cloud cover pressing down, they had to fly much lower than anticipated. Ahead, the mountain peaks were already lost in mist and cloud. The Junkers 52 flew over one ridge safely but then entered the cloud. Flying blind, the pilot turned too late and the aircraft hit some trees, killing everyone on board.

The site of the crash at Hartberg am Semmering was heavily forested with pines and sheer drops, very isolated, and access to the wreck must have been very difficult at the time. Today a memorial has been erected on the spot and, although there are direction signs once you reach the right area, it is still not easy to locate.

The General was returned to his home town of Munich for burial, and was posthumously awarded the Swords to his Knight's Cross on July 1, 1944, receiving a State Funeral on July 2. Today his grave in the Nordfriedhof (Plot 114) is marked with a headstone engraved with the Narvik campaign shield.

The memorial at the crash site. The names of the nine men who died on June 23, 1944 are inscribed on the face of the stone.

The journey to his last resting place in Munich's Nordfriedhof. The General was buried on July 2 with full military honours.



Charles B. MacDonald in his heyday as Deputy Chief Historian of the US Army. His grave (No. 88–2) lies in Section 1 of Arlington National Cemetery which has become the last resting place of so many who have achieved distinction in military service since it was first established in 1864. (Carl Swickerath)

From the Editor

Since writing my last Editorial to you in issue 66, published in November 1989, it is my sad duty to reflect upon the passing of two of the foremost authorities in the world of military history: Charles B. MacDonald and Miss Rose E. B. Coombs, MBE. Both served in the Second World War: he as a company commander in the US Army and she as a radar operator in the Women's Royal Air Force. Both achieved solid reputations in their post-war careers: he as Deputy Chief Historian of the US Army in Washington and she as Special Collections Officer at the Imperial War Museum in London. Both died of cancer within a month of each other and both were 68.

Charles MacDonald wrote from his personal experiences as a company commander in 1944, saying that he wanted to convey 'what it was like to live in a frozen foxhole under German shelling, to see German soldiers in greatcoats — like men possessed — charging towards you, to experience the horror of tanks clanking towards you, their long cannons preceding them like something obscene'.

His first book of the period, *Company Commander*, published in 1947, became almost a text-book giving young officers the feel of battle. Apart from being responsible for several volumes in the series of official histories of the US Army in World War II and other works, his 1985 book *A Time for Trumpets* (published as *The Battle of the Bulge* in the UK) is a cornerstone of the definitive accounts of that campaign. Charles MacDonald died at Arlington, Virginia, on December 4, 1990.

I met Rose Coombs in 1973, soon after I had published the first edition of *After the Battle*, when she told me about her wish to produce a comprehensive guidebook for those wishing to visit the battlefields of the First World War. She wanted the book to be profusely illustrated and had turned down several publishers who had offered to include just a small selection of photographs. We were of like mind, both firmly believing in the old adage of a picture speaking a thousand words, and together we embarked on the project which appeared as *Before Endeavours Fade* in 1976.

With her encyclopædic knowledge, reinforced by more than a hundred visits to the battlefields of the old Western Front in France and Flanders, she was highly sought after by those wishing to know more about the horrendous Great War of 1914-1918 and its visible legacy of hundreds of cemeteries and memorials and tens of thousands of graves. She knew intimately the stories of so many of those who had lost their lives and so much of the unwritten history which had been related to her by an ever-dwindling band of ex-Servicemen from that war. All was at instant recall from her prodigious memory and she was constantly in demand by numerous authors, researchers, historians and the like. She was instrumental in the establishment, preservation and re-siting of many memorials, and was often consulted by various authorities on the Continent. One of her last duties was the cataloguing of the library of her close associate of many years, the late Dr A. A. Caenepeel. Situated a few doors along from the Klein Stadhuis in Ypres, it will now be merged with her own extensive collection to become the Coombs-Caenepeel Memorial Library.

Constant revision of her guidebook kept her busy, and in recent years she was working on a companion volume to *Before Endeavours Fade* about the battlefields of the Second World War in Europe. It is to be hoped that in due course we shall be able to complete that which she had begun.

One of our last 'projects' together was in 1989 when I defended her reputation against a breach of copyright by Victor Neuburg in his book *A Guide To The Western Front*, published the previous year. Her work had been flagrantly plagiarised, much of it verbatim, and I was thankful that we achieved a substantial out-of-court settlement for her from the publishers, Penguin Books Ltd, in January 1990.

Just one year later, on January 7, 1991, she passed away peacefully having been terminally ill for several months. Her final visit to her beloved Ypres came a few weeks before in November when she attended the Remembrance Service at the Menin Gate in the company of survivors of the Old Contemptibles. A sad day for all but a last wish fulfilled.

Miss Rose Coombs, wearing her medals of service in the Second World War and the insignia of her appointment as a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1984, at the memorial service at the Menin Gate in Ypres on November 11, 1990.

Another recent death was that of Arno Breker whose name may be familiar to readers of issue 14 as he was Hitler's artistic guide during his brief visit to Paris early on the morning of June 23, 1940. (He assisted us in retracing the route in 1976.) Of Breker, one critic has written that his true position as one of the leading 20th century sculptors has yet to be recognised. Whereas so many artists and architects produce work to satisfy their own egos — architects' architecture is the term one reviewer used — Breker's will did not dominate the architecture, and Hitler found his work entirely to his taste. Breker created so much classical work for the Nazi regime (see for example issue 61, page 14) that it put a devastating blight on his post-war career. Only in recent years has his reputation grown, yet his name is still largely unknown — perhaps another case of the artist only achieving a name for himself after death. Arno Breker died in February 1991, aged 90; here we see him (right) with Hitler and Albert Speer in Paris in 1940, and at work on a neo-classical statue in his studio in 1976.

One of the most fascinating letters I have received of late arrived from Canada, from Miss Giselle Jakobs:

'I am currently working on my doctoral thesis in Geology at the University of British Columbia. I originally come from a small town in northern British Columbia and moved to Vancouver a few years ago. It was then, with the resources of UBC's large library, that I was able to pursue a line of research regarding my grandfather Josef Jakobs. The research began with a note in the *Game of Foxes*, led to Nigel West's *MI5* and eventually took me to your article, "German Spies in Britain" (issue 11). My father, Raymond Jakobs, was born in Berlin in 1932 and is the only surviving child, his sister, Regine, passed away in 1945, his brother, Norbert, in 1964 and his mother, Margarete, in 1970. The birth certificate for my grandfather shows that he was born in Luxembourg on June 30, 1898, the son of Kaspar Jakobs and Emma Lück. He fought in World War I and was married on May 27, 1926. We have a notice from the German Red Cross stating that he fell around August 16, 1941.

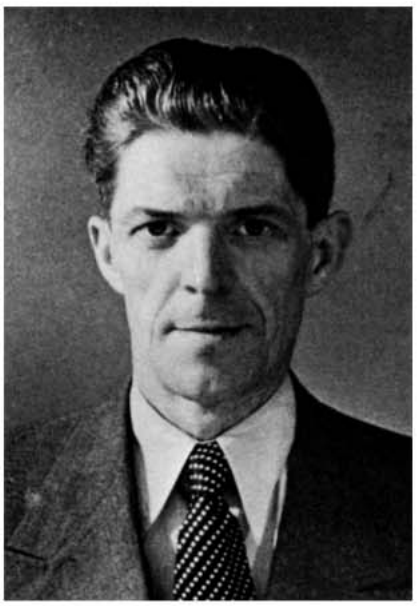
'Your magazine article contains the most information that I have been able to discover. I was wondering if there was any other information that you may have uncovered since then or that was not published in the article? Are there any photographs available? I understand that the trial proceedings are closed until 2042 but was wondering if any other information existed regarding his capture and incarceration. Does the memorial plaque for Plot G at St Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery at Kensal Green list the names of those whose graves were lost? I would appreciate any information you could send me regarding my grandfather.'

Readers referring back to issue 11 will understand my astonishment at receiving Miss Jakobs' letter as her grandfather was the only German to be shot at the Tower of London as a spy in the Second World War. Back in 1976 it had taken me ages to discover where Jakobs had been buried, and I came on the cemetery at Kensal Green a few weeks too late. All of the common graves in Plot G had just been bulldozed, leaving only a plaque in the chapel to recall the graves that had been lost.

In October 1990, I received a valid comment from Jürgen Meyer-Brenkhof in Westerland, Germany, concerning issue 47 which featured Crete.

'Referring to "The Kidnapping of General Kreipe" which I read with great interest, I felt somewhat disappointed that no mention was ever made in the article about the fate of the driver of the General's car. Further research has brought the following facts.

'The German driver had been wounded in the leg during the assault and was later put to



No longer just a name; the portrait of Josef Jakobs sent to us from Canada by his granddaughter, Giselle. Shot as a spy at the Tower of London in 1941, Jakobs' grave was one of the many lost when a large number of common graves were levelled at Kensal Green Cemetery in 1976. As a general commemoration, the statue which formerly marked the grave of Maria Grazia d'Urso (who had been buried in Plot G in 1932) was placed in St Mary's Chapel in the cemetery grounds 'in memory of all the souls at rest in this section' which had been closed in June 1970 to further burials.

Geospace Consultancy Services rewrite the textbook of archaeological exploration — on land, under the sea and in the air.

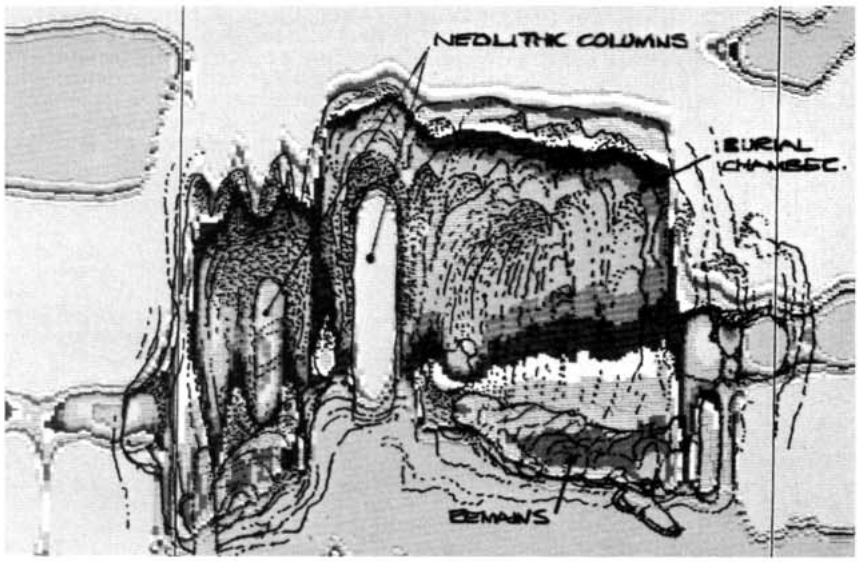
death when these wounds proved to be too severe to sustain the 18-day march across the island and he seemed too great a risk for discovery and of no further use to SOE. I am in no position to judge but feel that I am very much under the impression that this was a war crime and that it should be regarded as what it was: murder of a prisoner of war.'

The source of Herr Meyer-Brenkhof's information was the 'Final Report on the SOE Missions in Crete 1941–1945' in the library of the University of Crete at Rethymnon. However, as the name of the driver is not given, and German war graves records in Kassel are not filed by date of death, it would be difficult to single out a specific grave in Crete by date alone, although, as Herr Meyer-Brenkhof rightly points out, 'there cannot be many deaths at that time (April 1944) because there was no fighting in Crete. Perhaps', he says, 'you could include a short note to the memory of the poor sergeant whose only reason for his death was his wounded leg.'

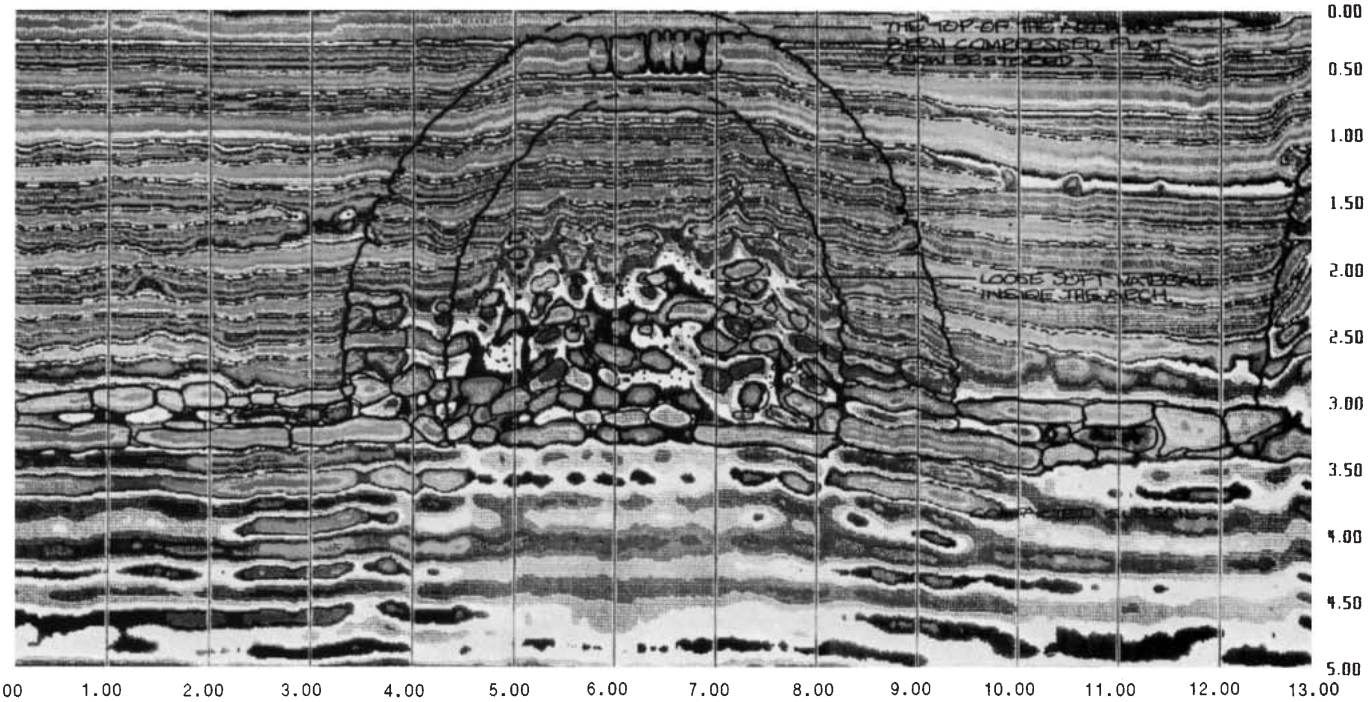
In February 1990 Stephen Curl of Hackney brought to my attention an article in No. 16 of the *New Builder* on an invention by a small Scottish company, Geospace Consultancy Services in Edinburgh, which could revolutionise the methods used to detect buried remains, be they archaeological or wreckage from aircraft, mines, or even humans. Managing Director and chief scientist at Geospace is Dr Colin Stove whose interest in radar dates back to the days when he was tutored by Professor R. V. Jones at Aberdeen University.

The GCS Stereometric Radar developed by his company is the world's first portable ground radar scanner which can locate objects up to 150 feet below the surface. Accuracy is said to be down to the last millimetre and computer technology can 'typecast' the printouts to ignore unwanted signals and differentiate, for example, between ancient foundations, pipework, cracks in concrete, buried treasure, etc. With such a potential, a special Home Office licence is required to operate the equipment, and Geospace also intends to be selective in the choice of organisations permitted to operate the radar.

Although its cost in the short term would rule it out as a tool for you or me, its advantages over the metal or mine detector are so obvious that it makes such instruments seem primitive by comparison. It can be towed behind a vehicle, carried under a helicopter, and even at an altitude of 100 feet, the accuracy is remarkable. Something which in the course of time could unlock so many underground secrets.



The Scottish-based company has developed a method of looking *through* the ground at what lies buried below. These are just two recent examples. *Above:* A neolithic tomb investigation in Gozo, Malta, and *(below)* a barrel-vaulted medieval cellar. The computer print-outs appear in colour with full measurements.



I have commented before that with some photographs it is only when we visit the location depicted that we find that the lab has printed the original back to front. Sometimes there is no fixed landmark to show left from right but we should have been more astute with the shot *(above left)* of the Panther near Chambois included in issue 8. Karel Margry, our man in Holland, found this series of pictures taken at the same spot and reproduced in a unit history on the 1st Polish Armoured Division printed in Breda in 1944. As he rightly commented, the hatch and storage tube should have been the clues, but no one has written to me pointing this out before. However, several readers have drawn a comparison with the fearful scenes of the 'Corridor of Death' in 1944 to the recent pictures on our TV screens of the fleeing Iraqis trapped at the Matla Ridge during their attempt to escape from Kuwait. The six-week Gulf War certainly had many echoes of WWII, not least the upstaging of Hitler's six-week Blitzkrieg of 1940 in France with the outflanking of the Iraqi defensive line by General 'Stormin' Norman' Schwarzkopf in 1991.

In issue 67 we gave details of the discovery of the *Bismarck* as released by Dr Robert Ballard at his Press Conference held in Washington in June 1989. The media organisation handling the project refused to disclose any further information as the choice material was being saved for Dr Ballard's own book *The Discovery of the Bismarck* which appeared in 1990.

James Rusbridger, that doyen of the world of security and subterfuge, wrote some interesting comments not even alluded to in Dr Ballard's book.

'Reading your excellent account of the sinking of the German battleship *Bismarck* in 1941 prompts me to mention that due to a succession of incredible errors on our part *Bismarck* very nearly escaped and it was only a fortuitous error in German cipher security that saved the day.

'After sinking *Hood*, *Bismarck* shook off the pursuing ships at night on May 24 as your chart shows and made for the French port of Brest because Captain Lutyens had made the incredible error of failing to top-up *Bismarck*'s tanks before leaving Norwegian waters and was short of fuel. On May 25, not realising that the Royal Navy had lost him, Lutyens sent off a long 30-minute signal using his four-rotor naval Enigma (issue 37), and the Neptun key to Berlin which was intercepted by GCCS and also enabled direction-finding stations in Britain, Iceland and Gibraltar to plot his position.

'The position was radioed to Admiral Sir John Tovey on board the flagship HMS *King George V* whose navigator, Captain Frank Lloyd, mistakenly plotted it onto a standard Mercator projection chart instead of a gnomonic chart essential for plotting DF bearings. As a result, it showed the *Bismark*'s position to the north of them instead of the correct position to the south. Tovey turned *King George V* around and started retracing his course to the north, assuming that *Bismarck* was attempting to return to Norwegian waters where Lutyens would have air cover from the German Air Force (GAF).

'The Admiralty's OIC watched Tovey's change of course with horror but were reluctant to interfere because before the start of the operation Tovey had insisted that he be supplied only with the actual bearings by OIC and left to draw his own conclusions from them. Eventually OIC plucked up enough courage to tell Tovey he was going in the wrong direction and after further delays eventually *King George V* turned round again and went back onto the correct southerly course.

'Meantime Lutyens' long message had arrived at Bletchley Park but at that time there was a long delay in breaking the Neptun key. Far away in sunny Athens, General Hans Jeschonnek, Chief of the GAF, knew that a member of his staff had a son serving as a midshipman in *Bismarck* and asked his headquarters in Berlin for news of the ship. The GAF contacted the navy who sent them a copy of Lutyens' long message which GAF headquarters simply repeated verbatim to Jeschonnek in Athens using a GAF three-rotor Enigma key which was also intercepted by GCCS.

'Because everyone at Bletchley Park was concentrating on messages from the Atlantic area to try and locate *Bismarck*, the GAF message to Athens was put on one side until someone chanced to notice that the cipher text length precisely matched that of Lutyens' unbroken signal. As the GAF keys had long been broken it was relatively simple to break the Athens message whereupon GCCS was able to tell OIC that *Bismarck* was heading for Brest.

'The *Bismarck* action was a good example of how intelligence can be misused by individual pride and perhaps just too much secrecy so that a second opinion or another idea cannot be sought. It was fortunate that on this occasion the Germans made more mistakes than the British.'

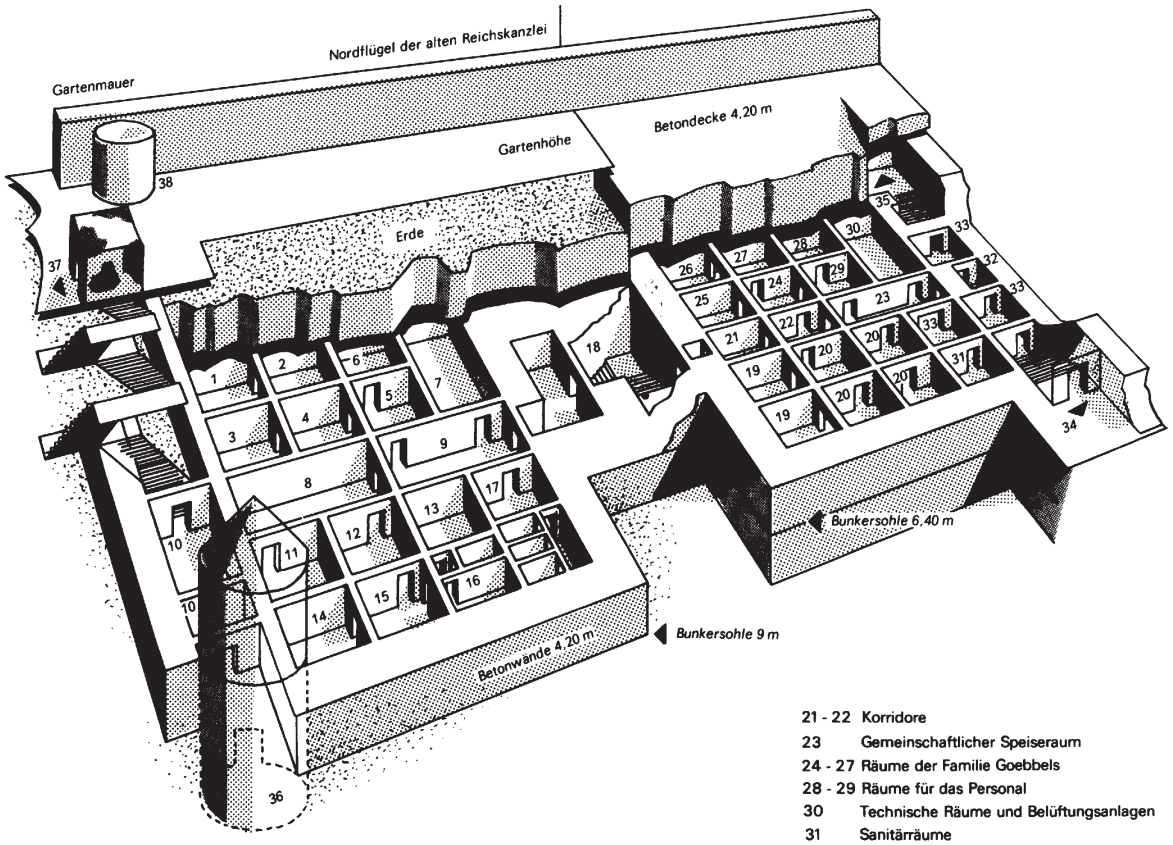
In March 1990 a brief note arrived from Holland from our regular author, Karel Margry.

'Remember the Canadians at Bons-Tassilly in issue No. 8?' (This was a reference on page 8 of that issue to the fact that it was only when we visited the village that we discovered that the original picture had been printed back to front.) 'Now look what I happened to stumble upon the other day — compare with the photo on page 29 of that same issue! On careful scrutiny, the Panther should have been a clue: its turret hatch and storage tube are on the wrong side. I wonder whether Alain Roudeix was mirror-eyed when he climbed into this panzer in 1944.'

Fortification enthusiasts will be pleased that the Belgian authorities have at last relaxed their ridiculously tight grip over banning any visitors to the fortress at Eben-Emael. (The story of its capture features not only in issue 5 but also in *Blitzkrieg in the West Then and Now* published this month.) Mr J. M. Serton wrote from t'Harde in the Netherlands to say that from May 1990 the fortress was to be opened at weekends with the intention of restoring it from the income derived from visitors.

Hitler-Bunker

Sogenannter Führerbunker im unterirdischen Bereich des Geländes der Reichskanzlei



1 - 2	Räume der Ärzte Hitlers	11	Lage- und Kartenraum	21 - 22	Korridore
3	Arbeits- und Schlafraum Goebbels	12	Hitlers Arbeitsraum	23	Gemeinschaftlicher Speiseraum
4	Sekretariat	13	Eva Brauns Wohn- und Schlafraum	24 - 27	Räume der Familie Goebbels
5 - 6	Nottelefonzentrale, Telefon- und Wachraum	14	Hitlers Schlafraum	28 - 29	Räume für das Personal
7	Maschinenraum für Heizung, Ventilation und Beleuchtung	15	Hitlers Wohnraum	30	Technische Räume und Belüftungsanlagen
8 - 9	Korridore und auch Konferenzraum	16	Bad und Ankleideraum	31	Sanitärräume
10	Wach- und Begleitmannschaften des Führerbegleitkommandos sowie Raum der Schäferhunde Hitlers	17	Toiletten und Waschräume	32	Eingang in die Bunker
		18	Bunkerübergang	33	Sicherheits- und technische Räume
		19	Vorratsräume	34	Zur alten Reichskanzlei und zu den Bunkern der neuen Reichskanzlei
		20	Versorgungs- und Küchenräume	35	Zum Außenministerium und in den Gartenbereich des Außenministeriums
				36	Betonturm; Belüftung und Notausstieg
				37	Ausgang in den Gartenbereich der neuen Reichskanzlei
				38	Unvollendeter Betonturm

At last the definitive plan of *the* bunker. We knew that the East German authorities had produced a plan of the Führerbunker complex before demolishing its roof, but they refused either to let us have a copy or even admit that they had one! It was released by ADN, the East German press agency, in March 1990, finally laying to rest the long-running argument about the staircase connecting the upper and lower levels. It also answers Elmar Widmann's query regarding the garden exit.

Berlin and 'the bunker' continues to excite readers' interest and I am pleased that I can now at last lay to rest the on-going argument about the stairway between the Vorbunker and the Führerbunker (issues 61 and 62 and follow-up in issue 66, page 43).

Positive evidence to refute the iron spiral staircase, as shown in Cornelius Ryan's original plan of the bunker, comes from several sources. First, Michael Davis of Maidstone, Kent, who has been most generous in sharing his own research with me, sent a copy of a letter he had received from Traudl Junge, one of Hitler's secretaries, in which she positively states that 'there was *no* spiral iron staircase . . . only normal concrete steps to both levels.'

Then in March 1990 the East Germans finally released the plan that I knew they had drawn up prior to the demolition but which they refused to provide for inclusion in our original bunker edition in August 1988. I now reproduce it here. It also answers another query raised by Elmar Widmann of Apfeltrach in Bavaria.

'Something that is far more interesting [than the staircase] is the question of whether the exit to the blockhouse in the garden with its 44 steps up the four flights mentioned by O'Donnell on page 49 of issue 61 was actually where it is in Tom Posch's plan and in the three-view drawing on page 30 in issue 61. That would mean that the blockhouse with its 44 steps was outside the lower bunker! But then there must have been an opening in the west wall of the lower bunker, which we can see so well on the coloured centre photo in issue 62. There isn't even an exit leading to the round watch tower at its corner! What we do see clearly is the oblong opening on top of the lower bunker close to its west wall. It must have been exactly here that the stairs led to the exit! That would mean that after leaving the long room in front of Hitler's suite you had to turn right to reach the 44 steps!'

At the time we published the first issue on the subject, East Berlin was still a 'police state' and I could not tell the full story behind issue 61 for fear of jeopardising the freedom or livelihoods of those who had helped us unofficially with our research. Now things have changed, the story can be told.

When Tom Posch originally contacted the East German Ministry of Foreign Affairs for permission to visit the bunker, then being excavated, he was refused even though he was an accredited journalist by the East Germans. Instead he was given permission to produce a feature on the development of the new apartment blocks which were being erected on the site. Nevertheless, with the site engineer, with whom he had become acquainted during his research on the building site, he entered the Vorbunker but it was full of water so he made arrangements to return two weeks later by which time, he was told, the East Berlin Fire Brigade would have pumped out the interior. When Tom returned, the engineer had already arranged for lamps to be strung up in the various rooms and corridors and he was able to descend half-way down the stairway connecting the Vorbunker to the Führerbunker. This lay at a lower level but water, rubble and debris from attempts by Soviet engineers to demolish the bunker after the war barred further progress.

At this point the Foreign Ministry found out about Tom's visits and an official telephoned him at his home in Holland late one evening, warning him that there was an absolute publishing ban on anything to do with the bunker. (He has since found out that the real reason was that the East Germans wanted to sell the story themselves to the world press and Tom had stolen their thunder!) The Ministry were so annoyed that they threatened to have Tom arrested and extradited. Hans-Joachim Hermann, the media

This 'bunker' was discovered in March 1990 as troops checked the former no-man's-land chosen for the Pink Floyd charity concert 'The Wall'. The British popular press claimed it to be 'Hitler's secret bunker' although its position just a few yards north of Voss-strasse (seen just behind the crane) indicates that it was just one of the many basement rooms which lay directly under the Reichs Chancellery.

minister to Erich Honecker, told his staff that 'we are now going to make things "difficult" for Tom Posch'.

Tom telephoned his official contact in the Ministry, Werner Heider, and told him that he had already sold the story and that he was too late to stop its publication. (I was, in fact, already working on the layout of issue 61.) Heider called Tom back several times, on the verge of tears, begging him to do something to stop publication as it would cost him his job.

Tom then contacted a Stasi (secret police) Lieutenant Colonel in the Foreign Ministry via a special telephone number only to be used in matters of great urgency. The Stasi colonel already knew all about the furore Tom's visit had created, and even greeted him with the words: 'I know what you are calling about.' The colonel told Tom that Heider was not going to be fired but 'we want to have him do a little bit more in his pants that will teach him a lesson'.

The Stasi colonel was able to absolve Tom and prevent his arrest when he next visited Berlin and we were able to go ahead and publish.

After the incredible events of November 1989, the authorities must have had second thoughts, for all further construction work on the site was halted. The new planning chief in East Berlin, Dr Günter Stahn, said he wanted to set up an architectural competition for the construction of an historic 'mile of remembrance' from Hitler's bunker down the Wilhelmstrasse past the old Air Ministry building to the site of the Gestapo headquarters. However, since then, proposals to turn this part of Berlin into a new commercial and administrative quarter mean that the remains of the bunker lie in a potential high-value development area. We shall just have to wait and see what happens, but at the time of writing building work is at a standstill.

On the same subject, Mrs H. M. Steenhoek of Rotterdam wrote in 1990 to tell us of her visit to Berlin.

'When I went to Berlin on June 4th I was very happy to have the issue "Reichskanzlei and Führerbunker" with me. Since June 1st it was possible to go where one pleased in East Berlin, so with *After the Battle* in hand I went straight to the Führerbunker. I had no trouble at all finding it. Also I was able to put an official West Berlin tour guide right when he showed us the wrong place. He was astonished to see *After the Battle*, for he had been telling it wrong for years!'

Confusion also came with the publicising of another bunker or cellar complex in the open ground of the former death strip. The discovery was made as the area was being checked for munitions prior to the staging of a huge pop concert due to take place in August. Inevitably it was dubbed 'Hitler's secret bunker' by the popular press, and we received several calls as to its authenticity. As the picture of East German troops sealing the bunker shows, this lay beneath the Reichs Chancellery itself north of the Voss-strasse.

A nice tailpiece came from Bob Ballard of Ross-on-Wye who sent a copy of a letter he had received from his brother-in-law who, he recalled, had visited the bunker in 1945. His brother had been serving with 147 Squadron on Dakotas with the task of opening up the post-war European routes for civil aviation and his letter ran as follows:

'I was in Berlin several times during 1945 and 1946, sometimes flying there twice in a week, and always staying one night. I cannot remember exactly on which trip I made the dramatic visit to the Chancellery, but I have a feeling it was on my first flight to Berlin, which was 5th September 1945. You will see that it was in fact before the American Hubert' [issue 66, page 44].

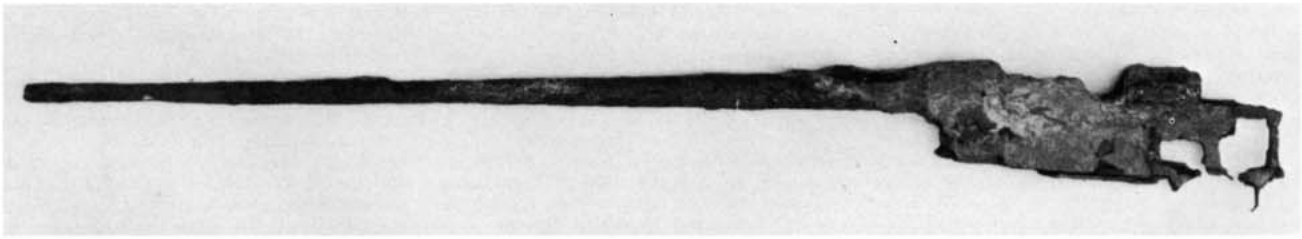
'Our crew of three (including myself) agreed together to make the attempt to get through the Russian sector and look over the Chancellery. We went through the gate with an American officer who took out a letter from his pocket (from his wife), and showed it to the Russian guard, saying it was a special pass for all of us, and it worked. The American went his way, and we went ours.

'The reason we were anxious to enter the Chancellery was because we had heard that there was a large quantity of chinaware hidden in the building, which had the Swastika printed on it. We figured what a find it would be. We searched the whole building — top to bottom — without success of course.

'There were indeed many steps (concrete, I believe) winding down to Hitler's bunker. When opening a cupboard inside his bunker, there was a brand new greatcoat, and inside the coat was Hitler's name. I tried it on, and I only wish I could have brought it home. What price would it have brought!

'The other amazing incident was when I went into Eva Braun's office (which was next to Hitler's in the Chancellery), and it was impossible to walk on any part of the floor because it was literally covered with smashed perfume/cosmetic bottles, etc. As far as I am concerned all these items belonged to Eva.

'I was able to obtain two rubber stamps, plus two printed documents from Hitler's office, with the "Reich Chancellery" name printed on it.'



Over 100,000 rounds of ammunition, 140 pistols, 28 anti-tank weapons and other assorted explosive devices were found in the former 'death strip' between the Brandenburger Tor and the Potzdamer Platz when the ground was checked before staging the concert in August. Three months later we picked up this rifle not a hundred yards from the Brandenburg Gate.

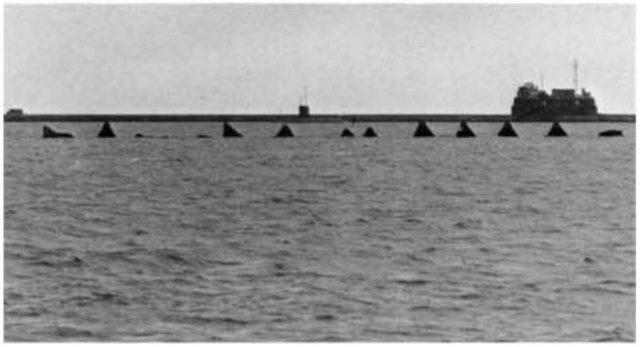
Stephen Johnson and son are prolific WWII explorers as this selection of photographs shows: from the real V-sign in Jersey . . . to a tree-rubbing near Plymouth. In issue 37 we ran an investigation by Leonard Flood into some inscriptions carved by American Servicemen on trees in the Saltram House estate. In the storm in January 1990 one of the best examples (illustrated on page 36 of issue 37) blew down. The National Trust, which owns the estate, was sympathetic to its preservation but asked for ideas . . . and cash. Perhaps an American organisation would be interested.

In issue 70, by way of a little light relief, I published the picture we had found of Churchill giving the reverse V-sign. We received some very humorous caption suggestions — and inevitably many were of an unprintable nature — at least in *this* magazine. But how about this shot sent in by Stephen Johnson of Plymouth of his son with a real wartime V-sign in St Helier, Jersey? Michael Ginns, Secretary of the Jersey Branch of the Channel Islands Occupation Society, had pointed it out to him on the wall of 'Kurangarira' in St Saviour's Hill opposite Grainville Playing Fields. Stephen went on to say that 'I have taken the liberty of sending you some more photos of our explorations in search of WWII today. I met one of your old school friends in Jersey recently. Terry is trying to raise one of the guns from the rocks at the bottom of the cliff at "Les Landes".

'I also met Michael Ginns who was absolutely expert . . . what can you say? He certainly extended extra depth to our visit and my son's imagination. He opened up "La Corbière gun" especially for us (we're CIOS members). We took Terry along as we told him about our visit. The enthusiasm of Michael Ginns and his dedication is 100 percent and I only hope people appreciate the tremendous effort he puts in for conservation and preservation.'

In Whitsand Bay, just west of Plymouth, Stephen found that the storm had had the effect of uncovering these anti-invasion defences on Tregantle Beach.

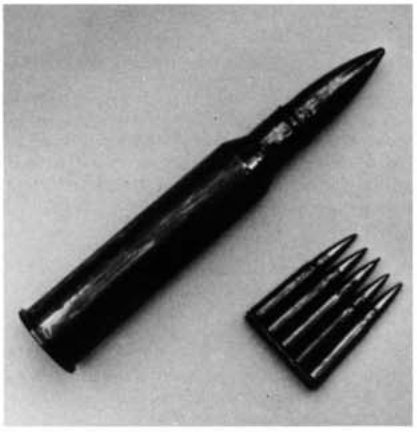
Stephen found this derelict naval field pumping station near Cremyll about to be demolished, and believes that these tanks supplied some of the D-Day fleet which sailed from the area.



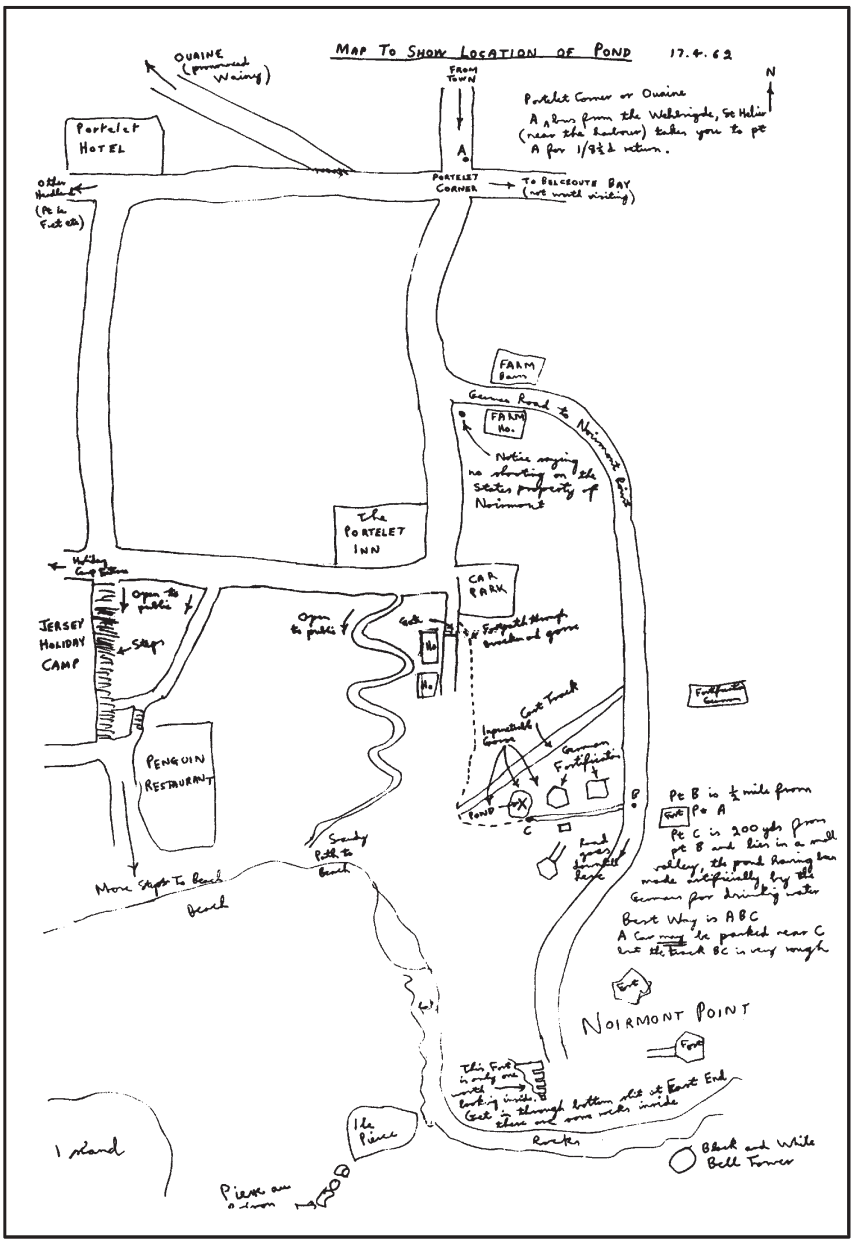
Remains of 'The Bridge' anti-submarine defences which protected Plymouth Sound between Drake's Island and Mount Edgcumbe where US forces were encamped in 1944. Stephen noted with interest that the presence of Servicemen appears confirmed by the succinct graffiti on a small building nearby which announces that 'Jack shagged my ass here 10.6.44'.

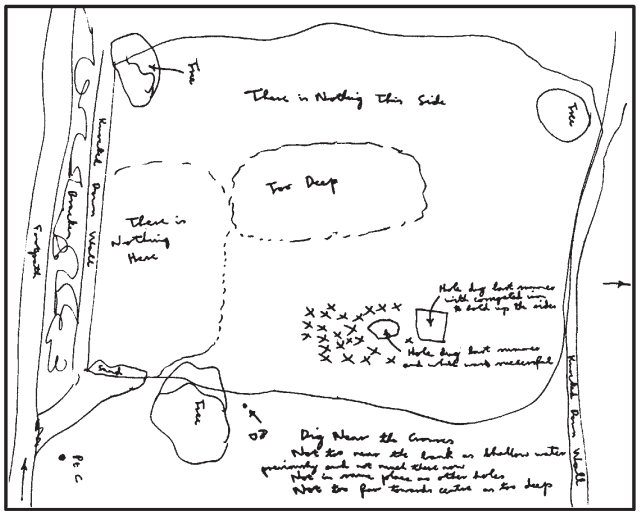
The reference in Stephen's letter to 'Terry' was of particular interest to me because, when I look back on it, Terry O'Brien was one of my mentors in those early formative years at school. In the 1950s Terry spent all his school holidays in the Channel Islands and always came back to school with pockets bulging with ammunition. (He received a brief mention from me on page 185 of *The War in the Channel Islands Then and Now* although I had lost touch with him at the time.)

Terry's major 'source' was a pond at Noirmont where the Germans had dumped loads of ammunition, shells and grenades, and Terry mounted an operation to try to drain the pond to get to the goodies. Remains of Terry's primitive corrugated-iron 'coffer dam' could still be seen when I visited the pond and other Jersey fortifications on my honeymoon in 1962 — an event which was later written up by my local paper under the headline 'Honeymoon spent in wartime bunkers'. I haven't lived that down yet!



Terry O'Brien used to make us schoolboys drool back in the 1950s when he returned from his summer holidays loaded down with ammunition and shells that he had recovered in Jersey where his father was the director of a holiday camp. He told us that the Germans had dumped loads of material in a pond near a gun site and one could pull out cases of ammunition in pristine condition. And he gave me these cases to prove it.


MAP TO SHOW LOCATION OF POND 17.4.62
OUAINE (pronounced Wayne)
FROM TOWN
N
Portelet Hotel
Portelet Corner or Ouaine
A
PORTELET CORNER
To Bel Royal Bay (not much visiting)
FARM Barn
FARM No.
German Road to Noirmont Point
Notice saying no shooting on the States property of Noirmont
The Portelet Inn
CAR PARK
Open to public
Steps
JERSEY HOLIDAY CAMP
Open to public
Footpath through bushes and grass
Gate
Gate Track
POND
C
B
PENGUIN RESTAURANT
Sandy Path to Beach
More Steps To Beach
Beach
Pt B is ½ mile from Pt A
Pt C is 200 yds from pt B and lies in a small valley, the pond having been made artificially by the Germans for drinking water
Best Way is A B C
A Car may be parked near C but the track BC is very rough
NOIRMONT POINT
Fort
This Fort is only one entry looking inside. Exit is through bottom slit at East End then out some miles inside
Rocks
Ile Piere
I Island
Black and White Bell Tower
Pierre au Dehan


There is Nothing This Side
Too Deep
There is Nothing Here
Hole big boat cannot come right up to the side
Hole big boat cannot come and shall wait accordingly
Big Near the Corner
Not too near the bank as shallow water
Not in corner place as other holes
Not too far from the water in the deep
Pt C

Although I never had a chance to visit Jersey, I salted away the information hoping that the opportunity would come at some future date. In those days the Channel Islands were a popular venue for honeymoon couples and I looked up Terry shortly before my wedding in 1962. Although I had not seen him for six years, Terry had still been hard at it every summer and he drew me this map of his latest effort to drain the pond. Sure enough, remains of Terry's corrugated iron sheeting could still be seen when I unwrapped my new wife beside the pond. Some time later the States of Jersey spoiled all the fun by dumping several feet of spoil in the pond. Today it is covered in weeds and vegetation but this is how it looked some ten years ago.

Now Terry is at it again, although today he is after bigger fish! When the British Army cleared up the Islands after the war, all the large German artillery pieces were hurled off a cliff at Les Landes on the north-west corner of Jersey. For over forty years the barrels have lain underwater in a twisted pile, visible only at low tide and then only for an hour or so. Terry took this picture of the ubiquitous Stephen Johnson and son inspecting the remains in August 1990. (See also front cover.)

Ex-Corporal Bert Shipton 'phoned from West Worthing, having purchased issue 59 on the Saint-Nazaire raid. He identified himself in the picture at the top of page 14 supporting Sergeant 'Di' Davis, badly wounded in his foot. He had been a member of No. 2 Commando while Bert was from No. 9 Commando and he said that when the photo was taken they had just been arrested in the warehouse area. The German on the right could speak English and he told them that his mother had had a coffee stall at the Woolwich Arsenal before the war. He had been protective of his two prisoners, whereas other Germans were trigger-happy, and they gave him some Mars bars and English money.

In issue 64 I included the story of just one of the estimated 100,000 illegitimate children of US Servicemen born in Britain during the war, and Virginia Sims's long and difficult search for her father. Then in November 1990, Mrs Shirley McGlade, founder of 'War Babies', an organisation set up by her to help similar children find their fathers, won an important legal victory over the US Government's right to withhold information in such cases.

Earlier in June that year, a US district judge gave the Pentagon 60 days to produce affidavits in 34 test cases stating that the Servicemen concerned did not want their identities revealed. In the past, requests for such information under the Freedom of Information Act had been turned down by the Defense Department on the grounds that it was an invasion of privacy. However, in the out-of-court settlement, the Pentagon agreed in future to release the last known city and state of the Servicemen concerned and the date of that information, thereby giving children a reasonable chance of tracing their fathers. It also included an assurance to forward mail to the last known address.

Over the years, several people had tried to recover the barrels, including the Royal Navy and the Territorial Army, but all attempts have ended in failure as the barrels weigh all of seven tons apiece. One 150mm K18, which had come to rest half-way down the cliff, was recovered in 1979, but Terry was after one of the big ones at the bottom, the best one of the four 155mm K418(f) guns from Batterie Moltke. Terry's plan was to use brain over brawn (well, he was in the top X-form at school while your Editor was a lowly B-former!). Where the Navy had failed with a helicopter and the Army with all manner of powered winches, Terry *(right)* arrived unobtrusively in Jersey that August with a specially-constructed, man-portable, hydraulic cylinder which he had designed himself, worked from a hand-pump at the incredible pressure of 10,000lbs psi! Even at a very low spring tide there was only a 'window' of about two hours a day in which to work, but after ten days the best barrel had been extracted from under another lying on top and moved several feet *(left)*, very good going when one realises that the cylinder pulls the barrel only one-twelfth of an inch at a time. During the past winter the barrel has been securely tied down ready for Terry's renewed efforts in May 1991. All being well, we will report on the operation in our next issue.

In my editorial in issue 58 (page 39), I reported on the unprecedented agreement by the US Army to release the remains of Private Eddie Slovik from the 'dishonoured plot' at Oise-Aisne for reburial in the States. Now a second American Serviceman executed during the Second World War has been returned to the United States.

I explained in issue 66 (page 41) how Louis Martinez, nephew of Private Alex Miranda (see issue 59) was campaigning for a reversal of his uncle's conviction for murder. Although it appears that Mr Martinez failed in his plea, late in 1990 he paid $4,000 to have Miranda disinterred and returned for burial in Santa Ana Cemetery, Placentia, California.

It is inevitable that as time passes many of the untouched historic places we have visited will change or even be lost. One of the most distressing to me of late was Batterie Lindemann submerged under the slurry from the Channel Tunnel workings on the French side as I illustrated in issue 66 (page 49). Now, on this side of the water, man threatens to stamp his ugly footprint on an equally historic site — the old Hawkinge aerodrome.

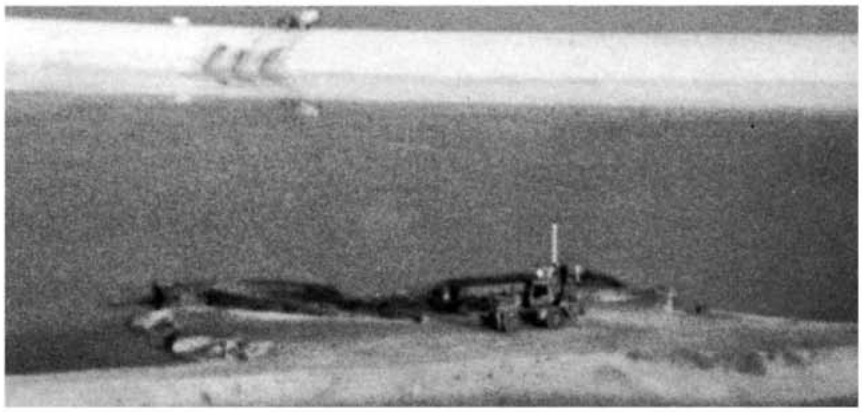
I described in *The Battle of Britain Then and Now* how Hawkinge remained (in 1980) a unique piece of unspoilt history of the period. However the living quarters on the opposite side of the road were demolished soon afterwards, but now the actual landing area — under the plough in 1980 — has been sold for development. The deed was done with the blessing of the local authority which benefited from selling agricultural land on which they had granted planning permission for re-development to the tune of £63 million! Never was so much . . . Money speaks louder than words down in Kent, it seems.

Even worse is the news from France that the bridge so dear to the hearts of so many veterans of Normandy, Pegasus Bridge, the first objective captured on D-Day, is under threat of demolition as the authorities in Caen are planning to replace it with a modern wider structure by 1992.

Mrs Arlette Gondree-Pritchett, one of the three sisters who own the historic café alongside, describes the bridge as 'sacred', saying that the new road will run some three to four feet outside the café.

'I do not think the French authorities realise how great the feeling is among the

Louis Martinez with the casket of his uncle, Private Alex Miranda, executed at Shepton Mallet in May 1944 for killing his sergeant. Originally buried in a special dishonoured plot at Brookwood, Miranda was reburied in France in 1949 and returned to the United States in November 1990. (Orange County Register)



The end of Batterie Lindemann pictured by Paul Bates of Ramsgate. Paul says that his picture shows the sole remaining casemate — which he believes is Bruno — in November 1990. The chalk dam is in the background with the Channel beyond.

Several readers voiced their anguish to us over the sale and proposed development of Hawkinge — RAF Fighter Command's front-line aerodrome in Kent in 1940. It remains a perfect example of a pre-war grass airfield and one at which your Editor has fond memories of landing (by mistake!) in a Tiger Moth in 1957. Those concerned should make their feelings known to R. H. Summers, Esq., Shepway District Council, The Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY.

tens of thousands of British troops and the French who know the historic significance of the café and bridge. We plan to protest to the French president and the transport minister but we need the strong support of people in Britain.'

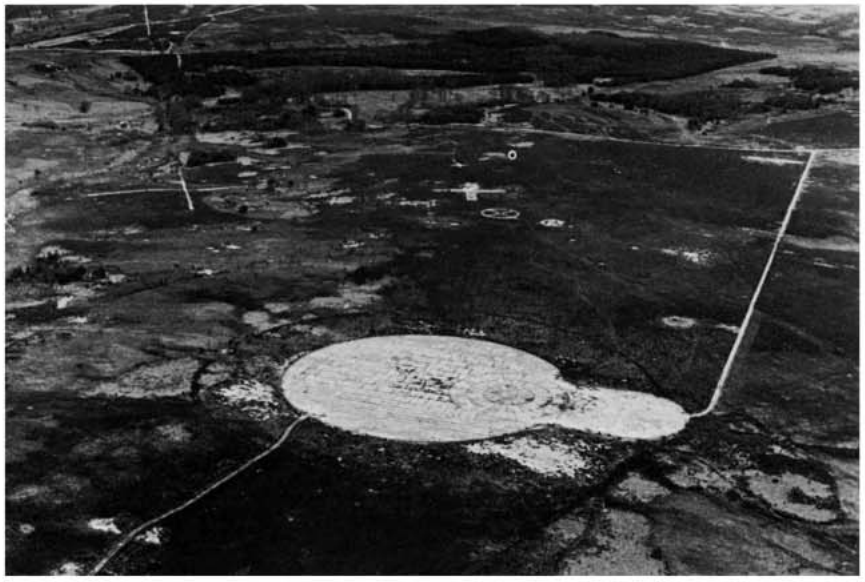
An interesting letter throwing more light on one aspect of the big gun batteries in the Pas de Calais came from Dr Erich Zimmermann of Darmstadt in October 1990. To date I had never had a reliable explanation why no trace of the bold lettering which appeared on Batterie Todt (issue 29) cannot be seen today. David Davies, owner of the battery museum located in Turm 1, told us that he thought the wording had been temporarily cast in plaster. However, Dr Zimmermann knows otherwise (effectively negating our comparison on page 22 of that issue!).

'I was present at the unveiling and remember quite well that the inscription was *not* on Turm 1. (This is also confirmed by one of my former comrades, the Feldwebel on duty at Turm 4, whom I contacted over this question.) We can both categorically state that the letters were fixed at the rear wall of *Turm 3*, opposite the main entrance to the battery. The material was concrete, but I doubt whether any traces of the letters will be found, owing to the destruction of this Turm after the war.

'By the way, I am very much impressed by the above-mentioned issue of your series, thereby learning much of the guns and batteries on your side of the Channel. When the first three rounds of "Winnie" were fired, I was on duty at Cap Gris Nez. The first round came down near the "Großer Kurfürst" battery, killing a driver of the battery on a road; the second one fell short into the sea off the Cap, the last into the fields about 300 metres south-east of the Cap. I visited the crater, and from that day onwards had the unpleasant feeling that the "opposite side" could answer back.'

One practical aspect we have had to contend with of late in producing *After the Battle* is the worry of having to subject our films — exposed and unexposed — to airport X-Ray machines. Although the operators may claim that they are safe for film, if hospitals can give cancer patients over-doses of radiation due to faultily-adjusted cobalt machines (as happened recently in the UK), I am sure one cannot trust the veracity of airport machines on the go 24 hours a day. I had a veritable tug-of-war with an arrogant official at Munich who refused to conduct a hand search of my films and who couldn't care less if my film on development turned out to have been ruined or fogged.

In my experience British airports are all willing to carry out a visual inspection of film, but our latest experience in Berlin was ludicrous in the extreme. While the operator (a real 'Rosa Klebb' type) was adamant that film had to go through the machine, a Tellermine in a plastic bag passed the test without any warning being sounded at all! I would not be so stupid as to carry a live mine on board, and this one, found at Carinhall (issue 71), had lost its innards although outwardly it looked the same.



Also under threat: Pegasus Bridge, the first strategic target captured on D-Day, and Ashley Walk bombing range *(above)* **where Barnes Wallis tested the 'Grand Slam' and other bombs. Henry Wills took this picture in 1971, showing the hard target on Leaden Hall (near Godshill in the New Forest) and other various target markers and filled-in bomb craters. Just beyond Pitts Wood in the background is the reinforced concrete target resembling a U-Boat pen with a six-foot-thick roof. Now contractors have been instructed to remove all for aggregate, the official argument being that the targets were only constructed for war. As Henry comments, 'If this is the criteria by which any structure built for war is to be judged, then I presume Corfe Castle, Old Sarum and even the Tower of London are eligible for demolition!'**

Batteries in action at Cap Gris Nez — snapshots sent in by Dr Zimmermann who served in the operations room of 242. Marine Artillerie-Abteilung at the Cap from 1940–1943 when he was transferred to Heligoland. *Above:* **Artillery temporarily sited near the Cap in September 1940. Dr Zimmermann believes that the guns were ex-Czech 24cm which were later moved to Cherbourg.** *Below:* **He recalls that when Grosser Kurfürst battery fired its first rounds, a British aircraft flew overhead.**

Somewhat uncannily, issue 27, published in February 1980, has produced two sequels ten years later, completely unrelated, yet both involving unofficial memorials to violent death. First in southern Germany at Webling, a little hamlet just outside Munich. There, in April 1945, a group of the Waffen-SS died at the hands of an American patrol; now the SS veterans organisation HIAG (Hilfgemeinschaft auf Gegenseitigkeit) have erected a birchwood cross where the shooting took place.

Issue 27 was published in February 1980, and I was very surprised to read in *The Daily Telegraph* on May 9, 1990, that a memorial had suddenly been erected to the 43 SS soldiers shot at Webling near Dachau concentration camp which we had described in that issue. I did not have long to wait to find out more. Harold Marcuse wrote from Hamburg three days later:

'Due to some recent reporting on the "Webling Incident" in the Dachau local newspapers, I chanced to read the above-mentioned article of yours. I found it highly interesting, and it is one of the better English summaries of the Dachau concentration camp history that I have come across. (I did spot a few minor errors, for example the Prisoners' Committee was begun in September 1944, not 28 April 1945, but they hardly detract from your otherwise excellent overall portrayal.)

'After becoming aware of the Webling incident upon reading your article (or perhaps a German summary by Ingrid Weckert in the journal *Deutschland in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 1987), the SS veterans' organisation HIAG put up a memorial in Webling. A Dachau newspaper translated your article, and a journalist from the other Dachau paper did a bit of research on it.'

I wrote straight away to one of our long-time readers in Bavaria, Elmar Widmann, and his reply advised us of what had blown up into a major issue in local politics:

'You are right, it is the Webling Incident that has caused some sort of public scandal in and around Dachau. As I have all issues of *After the Battle* I knew of course at once what was going on.

'The HIAG — a veterans' organisation of the Waffen-SS — had set up a stone commemorating the deaths of the German soldiers killed in the Webling Incident — on the private premises of a farmer in Webling. The inscription read:

Zum Gedenken an die 43 Soldaten der Waffen-SS, die hier am 29.04.1945 ermordet wurden, nachdem sie die Waffen niedergelegt hatten. (Commemorating the 43 soldiers of the Waffen-SS who were murdered here on 29th April 1945, after they had laid down their arms.)

'When this dedication of the stone became known in March to the Dachau City Council, they ordered its immediate removal, as it "presented a grave danger to the image of Dachau, as it arouses associations to what happened in the Dachau concentration camp".

'The farmer then applied to a court in Munich (Verwaltungsgericht Munich). The court ruled that the Dachau City Council had rightly demanded the removal of the stone as it would mean serious damage to Dachau and its citizens, especially with regard to public opinion abroad. The city, however, was ready to tolerate the stone, provided its inscription was altered. It would have to be a neutral inscription, for example:

Im Gedenken an 43 Soldaten, die hier erschossen wurden. (Commemorating 43 soldiers who were shot here.)

'Now to the report by Jürgen Zarusky in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the largest Munich paper with a large circulation in West Germany. He reports that the Dachau city councillors — before they got support from the Munich court — had used a pretext to get the farmer to remove the stone from his premises. They had claimed that the stone had been set up too close to a nearby Gothic chapel and that consequently this was against the "Law for the protection of monuments" (Denkmalschutzgesetz). A translation of the pertinent section in that report is as follows:

'"Warned by the Dachau Veterans' Organisation with regard to the Webling affair, the HIAG referred to a report published in the British military magazine *After the Battle*. Research carried out by the newspaper *Dachauer Neueste (Nachrichten)* revealed that the events at Webling had by no means been as clear as described therein. According to reports given by witnesses, a detachment of the soldiers waiting in their positions near Webling wished to surrender to the advancing US units and a white flag had already been hoisted. The SS captain in charge (Hauptsturmführer), however, had thrown a hand grenade and killed an American. This resulted in shooting after which the US soldiers also shot those enemies who had not perished in it. It is true that those were wearing SS uniforms, but in fact they were mostly men who had been drafted to the Volkssturm.

'"In the meantime the HIAG has — after reaching an agreement with the City of Dachau — erected a simple birchwood cross without any inscription."

'The whole affair only proves', wrote Herr Widmann, 'that some evil sort of national masochism, the result of decades of brainwashing, or what I recently called "the witch hunt", is still going on over here. So, for example, General Dietl, of Narvik fame, has been the target of the witch hunters for some years now [see page 32]. He is being accused of having been a close associate of Hitler and so some younger people, born long after the war and accordingly indoctrinated and brainwashed at school and at university, and by the media, are trying to have Dietl's name removed wherever it is used. Some streets and kasernes in the Alpine region of Germany bear his name, as he was a Gebirgsjäger.'

Also in issue 27 I reported on the search and recovery of the bomb load from a Ju 88 which had crashed in Epping Forest in southern England in December 1940, killing all the crew. Then a team of Royal Engineer Territorials found and defuzed two SC500s in April 1979, burning off the explosive in a nearby clearing frequently used as a parking spot by courting couples. Now, ten years later, pitiful bunches of flowers at the foot of the large tree (in between the photographer and Major Birch in my 1980 picture) mark the spot where Terry Gooderham and Maxine Arnold had their faces blown away by shotgun blasts in a gangland-style killing while sitting in their Mercedes shortly before Christmas in 1989.

The correct comparison for the picture of Hitler speaking in Munich on page 6 of issue 66, kindly taken for us by Elmar Widmann on the Mars-Platz. A new telecommunications building on the right replaces the old Infantry School building.

It was Elmar Widmann who also raised a point concerning a comparison included in issue 66, page 6, of Hitler in Munich. My caption information came from a normally impeccable source for identifying various locations in Germany, Hans Hubl (see issue 31, page 47) in Berlin. However, Herr Widmann explained that he was a native of Munich from 1939-1966 and 'in fact, the picture was taken on the Mars-Platz. The huge building is the former Officers' Training School of the Royal Bavarian Army. Later it was used as the Infantry School.

'I know that building quite well myself because an uncle of mine was a cadet there in 1918-19, and because I was a young teacher in the Wittelsbacher Gymnasium (Grammar School) in 1961 and 1962 just opposite the Infantry School. (Wittelsbach=Royal House of Bavaria.) The Infantry School lost its roof from incendiary bombs, but was reconstructed after the war. The enclosed aerial photograph shows the damage. The "X" indicates where the speakers were standing at the east end of the Mars-Platz, on the morning of Sunday, 28th January.'

Herr Widmann also kindly supplied us with a photo showing the correct comparison.

Since it was published in August 1982, Diana Payne's story on Ultra has brought her considerable correspondence and many new friends, and recently she sent me a photograph of herself taken with an Enigma machine in the museum at Longyearbyen, Spitzbergen.

Diana Payne tracks down an Enigma machine in Spitsbergen.

At the time I was researching issue 37, Professor Brian Randall at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne put the wartime code-breaking machine 'Colossus' into perspective by explaining that its processing capacity could easily be contained in a single present-day microprocessor chip. Last year I read that a programme has now been developed by Derek Greenacre which simulates the coding method used in the Enigma machine, making it simple to encrypt and decode messages using a BBC micro such as are used by British children at school (*Beebug* magazine, July 1990, Vol. 9 No. 3).

On the same subject, Jack Lightfoot, writing from 405 Devonshire Road, Bispham, Blackpool, Lancs, FY2 0JP, would like to trace any of his former colleagues who worked at Eastcote.

'I was enthralled by Miss Diana Payne's account of her "Life with Ultra". You see, I was one of the technicians she mentioned who serviced the Bombes. I served mostly at Eastcote, but also for short spells at both Bletchley Park and Stanmore during 1944 and 1945. I was 19/20 years of age at the time and I often wonder if I was the youngest person involved. Certainly everyone I knew seemed to be older.'

RAF technicians pictured at Eastcote circa 1944. Our reader, Jack Lightfoot, fifth from the left in the rear row, would like to hear from any of his former colleagues.

Shortly after helping us with the article on Royal Air Force bomb disposal in issue 68, Wing Commander Keith Hopkins retired, but not before he sent pictures of the RAF's latest investigation. This was another possible location of UXBs which we had passed on to Keith: that of the wreckage of a Do 17 which had crashed near Thaxted, Suffolk, in 1940 after attacking Debden on August 26 (*The Blitz Then and Now*, Volume 1, page 249). Keith writes that 'The dig in Mallet's Fruit Farm was the most "glamorous" I have ever been to and I never thought I would see the day when a "lady bomb disposer" immunised a fuze. They found a very early 50kg SC and fuze. It was also notable as it occurred in August 1990 — almost 50 years to the day from when it had been dropped.'

Another location we had passed on to Keith was at Matching, Essex, where we had it on good authority that the Americans had disposed of gas bombs by the simple expedient of burying them before they left the airfield in 1945. We had a local eyewitness who remembered the precise locations which had been wired off at the time with warning notices. Over the years both the wire and the notices disappeared, leaving the lethal secret intact and unmarked.

At the time of publication of issue 68 (May 1990) investigations at the site had uncovered traces of mustard gas and were still continuing, and I was asked not to include anything about the discovery in our article in case local fears were aroused or the location of the sites became known and interfered with. I was frustrated at not being able to publish our scoop, but acquiesced.

The first case of the recovery of aerial mustard gas bombs in Britain since the end of the war. Acting on information provided by *After the Battle*, the RAF investigated and uncovered suspect bomb cases at the former Ninth Air Force base at Matching, Essex. A news blackout prevented us from including the incident in issue 68, but I sneaked in with an ex-RAF veteran, Charles Chambers, to take a photograph.

Fiftieth anniversary bomb disposal in Suffolk. Almost exactly to the day when it came to earth in 1940, a bomb from Oberleutnant Karl-Heinz Heidenreich's Dornier of 7/KG2 is immunised by Sergeant Kelley Thorpe in August 1990.

The EOD team from Ops Flight at RAF Wittering had begun the recovery operation in February, uncovering eleven American 100lb M47A chemical bombs. The cases were split and the odour of mustard gas was very prevalent. The areas were taped off and referred to higher authority.

In the event it was established that the cases had once contained mustard gas, but this had been emptied before they were buried. The whole area was subsequently gone over with a fine tooth comb but nothing more was found. The whole episode was kept out of the local Press, although I had kept the chairman of the local council unofficially informed of developments.

While on the subject of munitions, in issue 18 we described the events surrounding the largest explosion during the war at RAF Fauld, Staffordshire, when the underground bomb store exploded, leaving a massive surface crater still to be seen today. Seventy people lost their lives in the disaster, but we found no memorial — either to their memory or the event — when we visited the area in 1977. However, on November 25, 1990, the Fauld Explosion Memorial was unveiled on the southern edge of the crater, having been brought into being by the initiative of the Hanbury Parish Council.

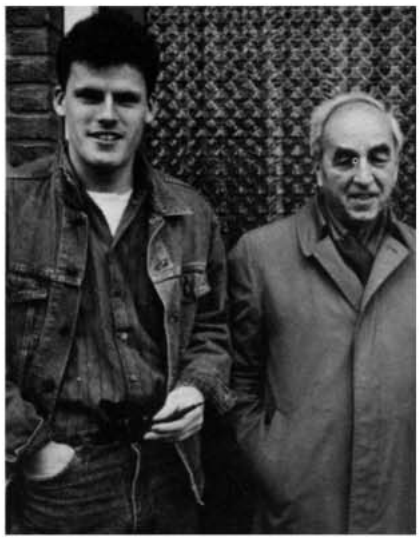
And another anniversary event in 1990. Forty-six years after a massive explosion in an underground bomb store at Fauld, Staffordshire, killed 70 persons, a memorial was erected to their memory at the side of the 800-foot-wide crater. The stone itself was donated by the Italian granite firm of Cirla and Son in Milan as a tribute to the six Italian prisoners who were killed in the blast. Eighteen of the dead have no known grave. Keith Hopkins attended the ceremony and took the photograph.

Just a selection of the wide variety of 'relic' pictures reaching us over recent months. *Left:* **A reminder of the Blitz when windows were protected with sticky brown paper to avoid injuries from flying glass — one of the major causes of injury during the bombing.** *Right:* **An 88mm Flak gun nicely restored at the NATO training ground at Vogelsang.**

I am indebted to all those readers who send me pictures of relics or interesting WWII remains that they have discovered. Mr S. J. Jones of Ilford, Essex, sent this shot of one of the listed buildings in Queen Victoria Street, London, with blast protection strips to its attic windows amazingly still intact.

Peter van Pelt of Brasschaat, Belgium, sent pictures he had taken at Vogelsang (issue 45) where he spent some time as a member of the Belgian military forces. 'Normally photography is not allowed,' he wrote, 'but I asked the commander's permission. The famous athletes' monument is still there. The German 88mm Flak found in the camp was restored by Belgian soldiers.'

John Serton of Eindhoven said he had been given one of the two pens in the stand on the table in front of Bedell Smith at Reims in the picture on page 32 of issue 48. Although the pen was not used to sign the surrender document, undoubtedly it is historically significant. Don Serton (no relation), who was with the US 75th Infantry Division in Reims, said he 'whipped' the right-hand pen after the ceremony and gave it to John in April 1989.



A fine collector's piece. John Serton (left) holds one of the pens from the surrender desk at Reims, given him by Don Serton (right).

A wolf in sheep's clothing. Having just put to bed Volume 3 of *The Blitz Then and Now*, which covers the period of May 1941 to May 1945, including the V-weapons, I was very interested to receive this picture from Michael Volk of El Paso, Texas, showing a flying bomb outside the back of the Air and Space Museum at Alamogordo — a name synonymous with the atomic bomb feature in issue 41. American forces carried much captured V-weapon loot back to the States in 1945 from the underground factory at Nordhausen for testing in America. Oliver Nephuth of Einbeck, West Germany, wrote in July 1989 to tell me about Nordhausen 'as you didn't get permission to visit "Lager Dora" for making *After the Battle* No. 6 [because of its location in East Germany]. Indeed, in my journeys through this part of the GDR I have never seen any foreigners. The reason might be that the nearest checkpoint at Duderstadt is only for German–German traffic. However, as you were only interested in the V-weapons, there would have been nearly nothing to see in the 1970s, as the two tunnels into the Kohnstein mountain, and most of the buildings of the camp, were blown up in the summer of 1948 to accomplish the terms of the Potsdam Agreement. In 1988 work started to open the "B" tunnel (chambers 45 and 46, the V1 factory) to join the concentration camp complex of Lager Dora which is already a national monument. Visitors have to park their cars on the place shown in your photograph in ATB No. 6 (page 36) and it takes about five minutes to reach the camp (the photographer stood in front of the "A" tunnel).' Since Herr Nephuth wrote to me, things of course have changed 'out East' and I have already passed our Nordhausen file to our French sleuth, Jean Paul Pallud, for attention.

Igor de Lissovoy's daughter outside the unspoilt bunker he found overlooking Omaha Beach.

Brian Riley's picture of the possible remains of a glider which he discovered close to Tavronitis Bridge in Crete.

Battlefield relics obviously excite many readers, but few can now recount a tale like that sent to me in January 1990 by Igor de Lissovoy of Indian Lake Estates in Florida:

'About ten years ago, while staying in Grandcamp in Normandy with my daughter, we were informed that some German fortifications, hidden during all these years, had just been discovered above the Omaha Beach. A man who has a little cider dispensing place on the black top road between Pointe du Hoc and Colleville, with the help of a few packs of cigarettes, agreed to become our guide to find these forts.

'We drove as far as we could, taking both cars, finally parked and proceeded to walk for 15 minutes through tall grass that reached our chins. We stopped, our guide parted some bushes and we descended a long flight of stairs into the fortification. It was at once obvious that not too many had been here. There was no trash nor garbage as is found in other bunkers. The walls were whitewashed and the electric light switches were intact. Our guide had another commitment so he left us there to explore on our own. As we emerged out of the other end, what a view of the Omaha Beach we had! It was much like a front row seat in a theatre balcony. After exploring for about an hour from one bunker to the other, we found some old bed springs, pieces of metal, broken dishes, etc.

'In one place I spotted what appeared to be a row of short logs piled neatly in the corner of a bunker. Logs? They turned out to be a stack of quite live AA shells! Corroded, but there they were! We could not resist photographing the "souvenirs" and even took one along with us to the office of the Superintendent of the Normandy American Cemetery. When they realised what we had, the entire office emptied in an instant! I was told to get out fast and not to return! Later I deposited the AA shell according to the instructions to a place for the disposal squad.

'What a temptation it was to take it back to the US with us! Can you imagine transporting this on a jet? I am certain that had I done so, I would have been reading all my *After the Battle* magazines while sitting behind bars during the last ten years!'

Brian Riley wrote from Luton, enclosing photographs taken in October 1989 on Crete.

'I have been to Crete twice now, armed on both occasions with *After the Battle* No. 47. On this recent occasion, I visited the Tavronitis Bridge, site of the landing by the DFS 230 gliders. Wandering around the site, I came across what looked like a trench system next to an olive grove within sight of the bridge. I suspected that not all vestiges of the battle would have been removed by the locals, and so I turned over some undergrowth. Underneath, I found pieces of a lightweight metal, wooden items, glass and rubber. I have a strong feeling that these were parts of a glider. Some green, light blue and red paint remained on the metal. The two photos illustrate these items; in the background of one photo is the bridge, target for the gliders.'

Then Koen Palinckx of Kapellen in Belgium wrote to tell us more of the history of how the Sherman pictured on page 487 of the book came to be there.

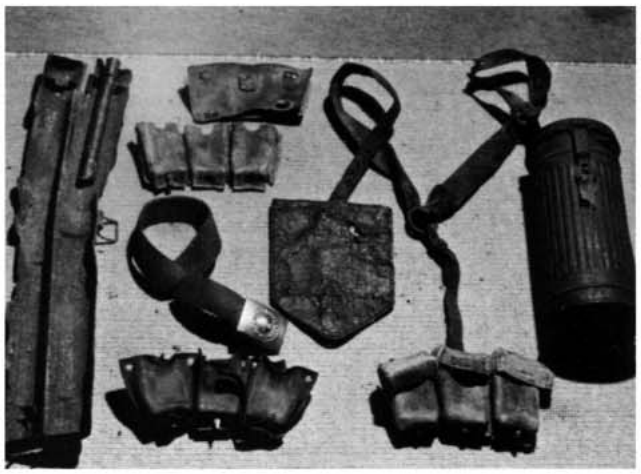
'My grandmother lives in Wibrin and I often go there to see her. Mr Debacker told me that the Americans abandoned it when they retreated, and when the Germans arrived they gathered together some of the serviceable vehicles — one being the Sherman. They set it up in the garden of his house, No. 2 Rue de la Grève, then occupied by a Mrs Louise, from where it could overlook the Wibrin–Achouffe–Mont road. The German crew were quartered in the cellar of the house — I am almost positive they were from the 560. VGR — certainly not Waffen-SS.

'The cellar is about four metres square and has in one corner a drinking water pump. To go from the cellar to the tank the Germans made a hole through the wall and dug a trench. They stayed for more than a week and when they left, probably under attack, they blew up the tank. The holes in the front armour were caused later by Americans practising with AT shells.

'I have recovered many relics in the Bastogne area and enclose some photographs.

'The first picture *[below left]* shows the result of several days' walking in the Bastogne area. Note the remarkable shape of the K98 which was found near a tunnel in the Remoifosse area. The Garand clip is a new one. The plastic object under the 20mm bullet are gas-mask glasses — we found them in the container in the second picture. The US spoon is one of the items we found in Mr Debacker's garden. We found the comb in one of the leather ammo pouches.

'Most of the items shown in the second picture were found in the Bastogne area. Only the container for a gas mask was found in Wibrin. We also found a piece of boot-buckle near Recogne, and a piece from a US glove. We also recovered a mess tin, a canteen, a shovel and a German mess tin in Mr Debacker's garden. Another canteen was found near Beho and two shovel blades near Remoifosse.'



From Corporal Kevin Greenhalgh of the 2 RTR came a follow-up to the piece on Fallingbostel in issue 50 (February 1985).

'I have been stationed here for several years, but it was in April 1988 that I started to dig up Wessex Barracks. I was showing an old SS soldier around the camp as part of an organised visit and with us was Captain Du-Norman from the Royal Hussars who was also interested and was writing the History of Fallingbostel and the British advance through the area. As we walked around the camp I pointed out old trenches and Captain Du-Norman then said to me: "Haven't you dug in the areas of the old trenches yet?" "What!" I replied. He then proceeded to show me some air photos of Fallingbostel from 1944 which showed our camp up as clear as day and also showed the exact position of every trench and MG pit!

'To say I was excited was an understatement especially as at the end of the war the British used these trenches to tidy up the camp and dispose of all unwanted rubbish, i.e. German uniforms and equipment. That very same afternoon, armed with a GS shovel, I disappeared into the trees at the back of one of the blocks; sure enough, you could trace on the ground the shape and direction of the old German earthworks.

'I picked a spot in the middle of one of the depressions and began to dig. Old tin cans, glass wine-bottles, bullets live and empty cases, German mess tins, old boots and a piece of dinner plate with an eagle and swastika underneath. All in one afternoon. I was hooked. From then on every dinner-hour, sports afternoon (digging keeps you very fit), weekends, when my wife doesn't mind too much, I disappear with my shovel into the woods. To date I have found old British and German motor-bikes, M3 half-track idler wheels, wheelbarrows, dustbins, ammo boxes from every nation and calibre of gun, mess tins from Russian PoWs, British and German, MP40 mags, PPSH A1, M1 Carbine, Luger, MPA4, old P38 pistols, revolvers, KFS sets with eagles and swastikas, buttons, parts for Comet, Sherman and Tiger tanks, live grenades, 20mm ammo, 40mm ammo, thousands of K98 bullets and empty cases, MG 42 bolts and barrels and a tripod for the sustained fire rôle. In short, a tidy collection of relics which now forms "The Wessex Barracks WWII Trench Museum".'

'The Wessex Barracks WWII Trench Museum now occupies one large room in cellar MB63 of the QM's Dept,' writes Corporal Greenhalgh. There are hundreds of items found in Fallingbostel plus pictures and my own collection of militaria.'

'I would like to hear from anyone with information on the area including Bergen Hohne, Rethem and Soltau from the end of the war till 1947' says Corporal Greenhalgh, 'If you are in Fallingbostel please pop in and see me. I am there most weekends and can always make arrangements to open up for visitors.'

A brief respite for the search team at La Ferté during two days strenuous effort which resulted in the recovery of the remains of three of the fort's defenders killed in May 1940. L–R: Messrs Lanotte, Denys, Antoine, Debout and Guillaume.

The drama of the Maginot Line fortress at La Ferté, where the whole garrison of more than one hundred men had perished down to the last man in May 1940, was told in detail by Jean Paul Pallud in issue 60 (see also his latest book, *Blitzkrieg in the West Then and Now*). Jean Paul explains that 'in June 1940, a German unit recovered the corpses from the interior of the fort and buried them in mass graves. Most were reburied after the war in a cemetery built near the fortress but not all the bodies were recovered, and as late as 1973 the remains of a further 17 men were found buried in front of Block 2. This discovery was due to the information supplied by Wilhelm Peinemann, who as an NCO was in charge of a section of the disciplinary unit involved in the removal of the corpses in 1940. Among these 17 men was the fort's commander, Lieutenant Maurice Bourguignon.

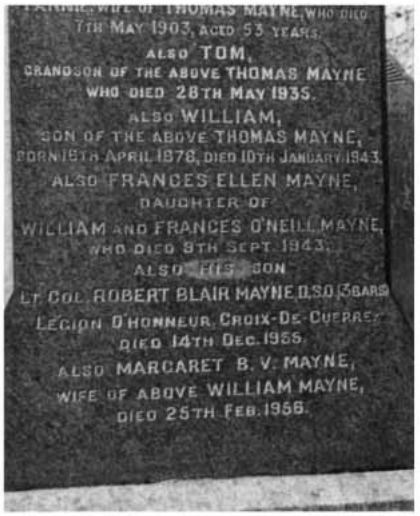
'The search for further missing men has continued ever since, and the partially-infilled moat behind Block 1 had been excavated with no result. However, after another meeting with Herr Peinemann in the summer of 1990, some members of the "Committee for the Memory of the Defenders of the Fortress" decided to completely remove the spoil from the filled-in moat behind Block 2. On July 21, with the help of three friends, two committee members, Jean Lanotte (his father Lucien Lanotte had died in the fortress in May 1940) and Pierre Debout, started to remove some twenty cubic metres of earth down to a depth of one metre. It soon appeared that the spoil was in three layers. On the top was some new earth that had been brought in after the war when the fortress was being prepared for visitors. Then came a deep layer of rubble cleared out when Block 2 had been tidied up, beneath which was the earth thrown into the moat during the heavy artillery shelling in May 1940. There was nothing of interest in the first layer, but the second was packed with personal equipment, steel helmets, gas masks, medicine bottles, watches, pens, cameras, coins, etc. Digging deeper, they reached the bottom layer within which were found the remains of three men who appeared to have been buried there by the Germans in the earth thrown into the moat by the bombardment. Only one of the three could be identified from his identity disc: Soldat Gilbert Thiebaut, born May 23, 1916, in Erlonfontaine. All now lie in the cemetery opposite Block 2 by the D52.'

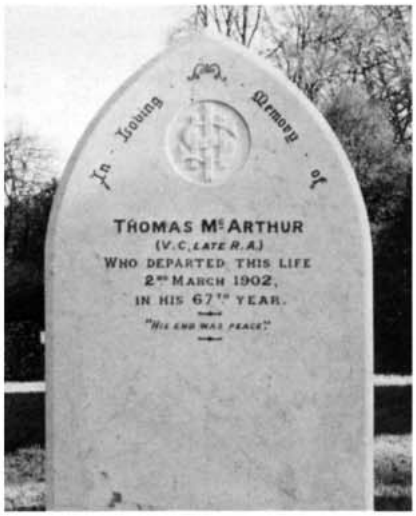
I am always pleased to receive photographs of war graves and memorials like that sent by Tim Chamberlain of Aslockton, Nottinghamshire.

'Issue 69 contained the article on Typhoons and at Banneville La Campagne near Caen I discovered the grave of a Group Captain listed as one of those who died in the Normandy campaign who had obviously achieved a distinguished record of service and had been killed at the advanced age of 38. Clearly a man of action.'

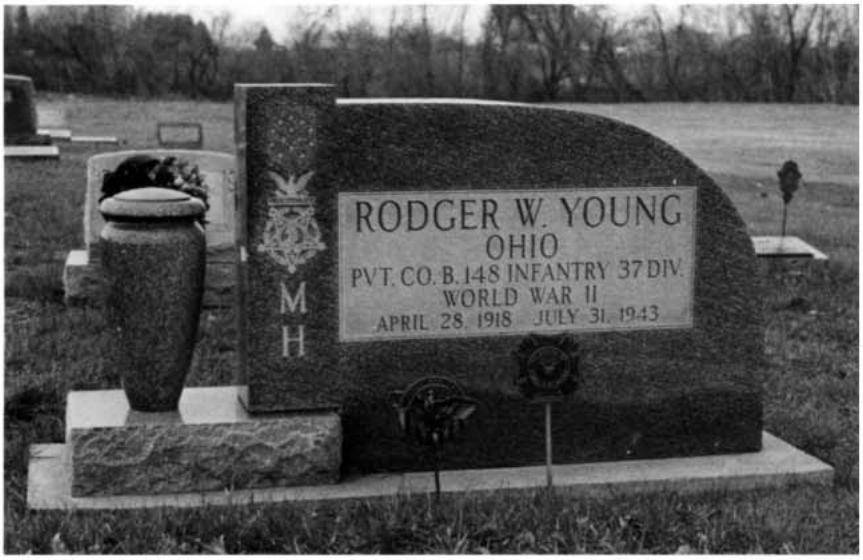
Photos of other graves of decorated heroes were sent by William Moreland of Belfast, Dr J. R. Purser of Chippenham, Wiltshire, and James Kloos of Cleveland, Ohio. Mr Moreland sent a picture of the headstone of one of the most decorated soldiers ever: Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Mayne, DSO (3 bars), Legion d'Honneur, Croix-de-Guerre, which he had taken in Newtownards, County Down.

Dr J. R. Purser's photograph depicted the headstone of one of the earliest VCs awarded for bravery in the Crimea in 1855. Thomas Arthur, it seems, changed his name to McArthur so that he could join a Scottish regiment. 'The church at Cadley Churchyard is now a private house,' wrote Dr Purser, 'and when the new owner moved in, he was appalled at the state of the headstone and notified the Army authorities. It was quickly replaced with the present one which can be seen clearly as you drive past on the main A346.'


7TH MAY 1903, AGED 53 YEARS.
ALSO TOM,
GRANDSON OF THE ABOVE THOMAS MAYNE
WHO DIED 28TH MAY 1935.
ALSO WILLIAM,
SON OF THE ABOVE THOMAS MAYNE,
BORN 15TH APRIL 1878, DIED 10TH JANUARY 1943.
ALSO FRANCES ELLEN MAYNE,
DAUGHTER OF
WILLIAM AND FRANCES O'NEILL MAYNE,
WHO DIED 8TH SEPT. 1943.
ALSO HIS SON
LT. COL. ROBERT BLAIR MAYNE D.S.O. 3 BARS
LEGION D'HONNEUR, CROIX-DE-GUERRE
DIED 14TH DEC. 1955.
ALSO MARGARET B. V. MAYNE,
WIFE OF ABOVE WILLIAM MAYNE,
DIED 25TH FEB. 1956.



Left: **Group Captain Charles Appleton, CBE, DSO, DFC, killed in Normandy.** *Centre:* **Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Mayne, DSO (3 bars), Legion d'Honneur, Croix-de-Guerre, buried in Northern Ireland.** *Right:* **Gunner McArthur, VC, at rest in Wiltshire.**



Oceans apart. *Left:* **In Ohio a characteristic American-style headstone on the grave of Rodger Young, Medal of Honor hero, and** *right* **an unusual symbolic grave to the missing Battle of Britain pilot, Jaroslav Sterbacek, at Brookwood, Surrey.**

James Kloos enclosed a picture of Private Rodger Young's grave, who had been awarded his Medal of Honor posthumously for attacking a Japanese pillbox single-handed on New Georgia in the Solomon Islands in July 1943. Now he lies in Clyde Cemetery, Ohio.

'During my research,' wrote Stephen Flower who works at the Brooklands Museum in Surrey, 'I visited Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey to trace the graves of three Luftwaffe airmen killed while attacking Brooklands airfield during the Battle of Britain. While I was there, I noticed a group of graves bearing what appeared to be Czech names, although they were separate from the main Czech plot and the headstones were of a different design. Among them was Flight Lieutenant Prchal, General Sikorski's former Liberator pilot (issue 20) and also, intriguingly, Pilot Officer Jaroslav Sterbacek, killed on 31st August 1940.

'I looked through the first edition of *The Battle of Britain Then and Now* to find Sterbacek listed as missing. I have since read your updates to the Mk III and Mk IV editions, but so far there has been no reference to Sterbacek being found. One Hurricane that was thought to be his turned out to belong to 601 Squadron, as you may recall. There is the possibility that these graves are only markers, but if they are real, then it seems that someone has located and reburied Sterbacek within the last few years. I didn't write to you about this earlier as I felt sure that someone else would have beaten me to it. However, I've glanced through the Mk V edition and not seen any reference to Sterbacek being found.'

By way of explanation, the plot in question is not the official Czech sector maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, but a separate area owned by the Czech Ex-Servicemen's Association. The headstones of the latter are similar but not identical to the CWGC Czech design.

The Prchal grave was easy to explain as I commented on his death in issue 58, page 47, and it contains an urn holding half his ashes.

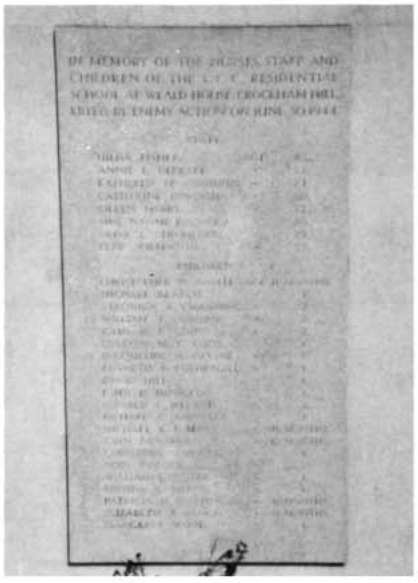
The grave of Pilot Officer Sterbacek is only a symbolic one and is empty, the commemorative headstone being erected at the request of his brother who lives in Switzerland. (I commented at length in my editorial note to the Mk III edition of *The Battle of Britain Then and Now* on the diplomatic row which blew up over the investigation of Sterbacek's reputed crash site which subsequently turned out to be that of Pilot Officer Doulton.)

One ought to point out that it is not a British custom to establish symbolic graves (as opposed to memorials), although this does seem to be accepted practice in some

European countries. For example, Mr H. Aker of Amsterdam wrote to ask me if Jodl was really buried in the family grave he had discovered on Frauenchiemsee, a small island on the Chiemsee located 80 kilometres south-east of Munich: 'The most important question is whether the story of the cremation is true or not and are the other executed Nazis cremated or buried in secret graves.'

Although I knew the question was academic, I felt that in the context of historical accuracy I should get further details on the grave, and the German War Graves Commission confirmed that it was merely a symbolic inscription added after October 16, 1946.

Finally, let me close with a note of two memorials at the opposite ends of the earth: one in Australia, the other in Kent. The first came from Bevan Fenner of the memorial at the Murchison PoW Camp where German, Italian and Japanese prisoners were held between 1940 and 1946. Then Colin Fairman of Edenbridge, Kent, sent a photo of a plaque in his local churchyard to the nurses, staff and children of the school at Weald House, Crockham Hill, struck by a V1 on June 30, 1944. As Colin comments, 'it shows that even sleepy towns such as this had their share of tragedy. The children were all evacuees and were killed when their hospital, surrounded by miles of woodland, received a direct hit.'



Death is only an horizon. *Left:* **Murchison, Australia;** *right* **Crockham Hill, Kent.**